

A MESSAGE FROM LONDON

The
FREETHINKER.

Edited by
Chapman Cohen.

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To

The President of the R.A.I.,

Dear Sir:

May I, on behalf of the National Secular Society, offer my congratulations on your Congress, and also my best wishes on your success. All over the world the fight that Freethought is waging against superstition and social injustice is of the same texture, however different it may be in form. It is a work that calls for an expression of the best in man, requiring strong conviction, a type of moral courage not common, and an intellectual clarity still more uncommon. In India you have your special difficulties, as we have ours, and in the near future these difficulties promise to increase rather than to diminish.

But whatever the difficulties may be, we can all fight on, comforted by the conviction that while the enthroned power of superstition and injustice may conquer for awhile, no form of tyranny or superstition has ever found itself able to permanently check the development of Freethought and the impetus of accumulated knowledge.

Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have delivered this message in person. I have long had a desire to visit India, but I question whether I shall ever be able to leave my work for a period lengthy enough to satisfy my ambition.

With every appreciation of the courage with which our Indian brethren are meeting the special difficulties of their position, I remain,

Yours faithfully,



President,
National Secular Society.

The bigots have asked for the lash
and they shall have it—G.W.Foote.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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PROHIBITION

BY

R. D. KARVE

Congress governments in different provinces of India have announced their intention of enforcing prohibition and have already started it on a small scale in some small places. Being under the dictation of Mahatma Gandhi, they have to carry out his wishes and one cannot blame them for anything they do, and no doubt they will have the blessings of other moralists of the Gandhi type, with 'inner voices' at their service and even direct access to the 'Almighty'. The only wonder is that the Almighty has not been able to do anything in the matter himself and has to wait for the Congress government to come into power to carry out his behests. It should be such a simple matter for the Almighty to persuade drunkards not to drink, how-

ever cheap liquor may be allowed to be sold. But perhaps he wanted to give credit to the Congress governments and it is not at all bad as a popularity stunt. But one wonders very much if the Almighty likes it, since he let a similar experiment in the United States fail miserably. He even inspired people to cheat the law in all possible ways. But God apart, the thing has to be considered on its own merits.

The principal argument advanced in favour of prohibition is that it rescues the poor labouring classes in spite of themselves from the evils of drink, the damage to health and especially the sufferings to which their wives and children are subjected owing to the wages of the men being mostly spent on liquor. There

is obviously some truth in this argument, though among the labouring classes, families are not entirely dependent on the earnings of the men. The women also earn their wages, except during a few months before and after child-birth, during which of course, in a properly managed society, they should get leave on full pay as they do in Russia, and as can be easily provided by law even without Communism. As it is, perhaps, they are badly off during these few months. Before jumping to prohibition, however, as the only solution of this difficulty, one must consider other means which have been successfully employed to take temptation out of the way of the labourer. It has been experimentally found that if liquor shops are closed even for a few hours on pay-days, so that the labourer with his pocket full will not meet one on his way home, he takes his pay home instead of going to drink. It must be remembered that the labourer is by no means an inhuman monster, unless he is so far gone in drink that he does not care what happens. Otherwise he too cares for his family just as much as anybody else. This is a very simple method, not involving any expense or inconvenience to Government.

Another method that is also successful to a certain extent is rationing, as so many different articles were rationed during and after the last war. In some cases, coupons were issued to everybody who asked for them and the article could not be obtained without surrendering a coupon, and then only in a limited quantity. Coupons can have dates stamped on them, so that only one coupon can be used on the same day. This is a perfectly feasible method, though the display and the kudos will not compare with the prohibition method. Even if this fails, it will have given permanent prestige to the Congress for having made a brave attempt. One might have expected a so-called peoples' government to care more for the results than for the show.

For it is hardly necessary to say that the effects of Prohibition will not be all to the good, even leaving aside the question of the revenue which goes to pay for education, and the perfectly ridiculous scheme which the Mahatma has brought forth for making education self-supporting. Apart from the immorality of trying to make people moral in spite of themselves, and granting for a moment that it is immoral to drink even a drop of alcohol, the effect of prohibition will obviously be that it will not only encourage illicit distillation, which even an efficient police force in America could not prevent, but will lead people to take any poison that comes to hand as a substitute for drink. People have been known to drink even methylated spirit, though it is specially made unfit to drink. Besides, there are the intoxicants already in use, such as Bhang, Ganja, opium etc. The police cannot even stop cocaine being imported, in spite of the absolute prohibition. All these are by no means preferable to alcohol. It seems Government is going to prohibit these other drugs as well, but it will be very difficult to prevent the cultivation of Bhang. If the real object is to prevent people spending too much money on drink, government can easily make drink cheaper by removing the duty on it. If it is intended to prevent the toxic effect, the main argument as regards misuse of the family money disappears. Besides, the more prohibitions there are, the more difficult they will be to enforce.

Apart from the so-called intoxicating drugs, there are other things like tea and coffee, which if taken in excess, are certainly not beneficial, and the consumption of these is bound to increase. There are drugs like aspirin to which people can easily become addicted. This shows how enormous the prohibitions will have to be, if peoples' health is really the principal concern of the government.

Considering the moral effect of prohibition, it may well happen that drink

may acquire the proverbial added sweetness of stolen kisses and tempt people to drink who would otherwise never have thought of it. If real opium is prohibited, people may take to religion, which is rightly known as the opium of the people. This will perhaps be welcome to the Mahatma, but will have a deplorable effect on less saintly persons. For to the multitude, religion is nothing but a laundry for the soul, which washes away all sin, however heinous it may be. It is in effect a permission to sin. A soul steeped life-long in sin is washed spotlessly clean if the mouth utters the name of God just before death. The Jew's day of repentance at the end of the year is permission to sin afresh in the new year and the repentance need not at all be real. The same is true of all religions, though there may not be a special day of repentance.

Of course there is not a bit of truth in the allegation that alcohol is harmful even in small quantities; and even in perceptible quantities, it is not as harmful as it is alleged to be. Medically speaking, a clear distinction requires to be made between distilled and non-distilled liquor. Wines such as are mainly drunk on the Continent in Europe are recognized as useful ingredients of diet, while distilled liquors are definitely harmful except in very small quantities. Still it has to be noted that Scots are the longest lived people in the world and that almost all of them habitually drink whisky, which is a distilled liquor. The toddy which is drunk here by the labouring classes is not distilled and is useful as a food and even as a stimulant. All stimulants are not necessarily bad and good food is also a stimulant. In excess, anything is bad, even rice, which is usually considered so harmless as to be prescribed to patients.

If Government is to deal in the same way with all the bad habits of the population, they will have a hard job. Liberty is precious even if it does a little harm, especially if it is harm to oneself. It is no use saying that liberty means liberty

to do good, because nobody can strictly define good, and if good is to be defined by somebody else, it is no longer liberty. If laws are tyrannical, it is no use saying that everybody has the liberty to behave according to the law. Laws must be such as to allow a wide freedom of choice, if there is to be any liberty at all. And if there is no freedom of choice, where is the merit in being moral?

Gambling does quite as much harm as any other bad habit, even drink. Why does Government not deal drastically with the gambling on the race-course? Everybody knows that if betting is prohibited on the race-course—including betting on races anywhere else—the so-called interest in horse-breeding will disappear as if by magic. Everybody knows that it is a pretence. There is a vital interest in breeding milch cows, but why breed race-horses when horses, even as a means of transport, are bound to disappear gradually? And if other animals can be bred without any racing, why is racing required for horses, and in any case, why should there be any betting even if there are races? Does the Congress Government dare to tackle that question?

To come back to drink, it is sometimes argued that drink is not necessary. Are we going to be deprived of everything that is not necessary? In that case, what about clothes? Are they to be used only when they are necessary? Unless all comfort is to be abandoned, alcohol will have to be allowed to a certain extent.

It is said that prohibition is not new in India. Is drink new in India? Even the ancient Rishis were fond of "Soma-rasa," which was an intoxicating drink though nobody knows exactly what it was. The story of how drink came to be prohibited to Hindus does not at all show that it was prohibited on account of its effects on the health. During the prolonged war between the gods and the demons (Rakshasas), Shukracharya, the great sage who was the guru of the demons, used to revive the dead on their side by some magic incantation. The

gods did not know this magic and were at a loss what to do. At last they sent Kacha, the son of their Guru, to Shukracharya to remain with him as his disciple and learn this magic before he came back. The demons saw through the trick and tried by all possible means to get rid of him, but every time they killed him, their Guru brought him back to life at the entreaty of his daughter who had fallen in love with Kacha. In the last resort, they not only killed him, but burnt him and mixed his ashes with the wine of the Guru, who thus drank him up and when he wanted to revive him as usual, he heard the voice of Kacha coming from inside himself, telling him that he had heard the Guru's call, but dared not come out, lest that should

kill his Guru. The latter was in a fix and was obliged to teach Kacha the magic incantation, so that he could in his turn revive the Guru after he had come out of his stomach. And then the great sage declared that nobody should drink wine, because the consequences had been so bad in his case. Now this is perfectly silly. One could understand it if he had done something very bad when he was drunk, but what had happened was a mere accident. Poison may be given even through water, so by the same reasoning, water would have to be abandoned! The moral is that people will use any kind of argument to support their fads. This is rationalisation, which is a very different thing from reason.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN REASON AND RELIGION

BY

ABRAHAM SOLOMON

(This article has already appeared in a curtailed form in the "Sunday Standard" of 12-12-37.—Ed.-Reason).

Recent controversies in the columns of local papers evidence the widespread misconceptions existing among the well read and intelligent public regarding Rationalism and cognate subjects. Although it is not possible to deal exhaustively with the above subject within the limits of these columns, I shall try to state the case for Rationalism as briefly and lucidly as possible, and thus dispel much of the ignorance and misunderstanding existing on these subjects. In every discussion we must always beware of the treachery of words and their significance, and bear in mind the shortcomings of the language in use. It is a truism that the larger part of any intellectual disputation is found, on close examination, to be essentially a dispute on the actual meaning of words, and this is particularly evident in religious controversies. So to avoid this discussion

dwindling down to mere verbosity and pedantry, I shall begin by stating in precise terms, what is meant by Religion, Materialism and Rationalism.

* * * RELIGION

This word has no clear-cut definition. If an appeal is made to the dictionary, the Concise Oxford states that it is the human recognition of a superhuman controlling power, and especially of a personal God entitled to homage and devotion. But we cannot recognize the absolute authority of any lexicon, inasmuch as it is a mere record of the consensus of opinion as to the meaning of a word at the time of compilation. The only definition that covers all the facts and which stresses the essence of all religions, high or low, savage or civilized, is that given by Taylor, viz: the belief in supernatural beings. Now the vast advance in scientific and cosmical knowledge has made the belief in an anthropomorphic God an untenable myth. The idea of

a God of miracles and pestilences, of one responsible for the disasters in Nature and the abominations of Man, is incompatible with the fundamental facts of Biology, Physics and Anthropology. There is no question today of the general abandonment by clear-thinking scientists of a God who continually interferes with natural operations. What we have in lieu is a deity who exists somewhere apart from Nature, and is responsible for the existence of things; God is thereby reduced to a Force. A blind Force? We shall stop at this point, and briefly examine as to what is meant by Materialism.

* * * *

MATERIALISM

Materialism is directly opposed to Religion, in that it has always claimed that the closest scrutiny of the world fails to reveal the slightest trace of supernatural influence. The first principle of Materialism is that the world as we know it is a consequence of the interaction of natural forces. But a Materialist recognises that it is a power, eternal, infinite, unknowable, "the power behind the sun", energizing all in the universe, the dead no less than the quick; a power in fact equivalent to the purest conception of God stripped of all dogma and superstition; a power in all and through all, whence we came, of which we are a part and whither we return after death; a power active in all atoms of matter composing the nebulae, the stars, the dust and the living cell; a power determining every action and reaction in the eternal evolution of the universe, the earth and life upon earth. This is what the Materialist recognises as the cosmic power from which there is no escape; a supreme power which need not necessarily be a supreme being; a power to be studied and not to be prayed to with abject devotion. If the religionist is pleased, after this explanation, to term a Materialist an atheist, well he is welcome to do so.

* * *

RATIONALISM

Rationalism may be defined as "the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of Reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority." Rationalism is not a creed or cult with a set of beliefs or dogmas, as is generally presumed; it does not concern religion alone, but is directed towards traditional religious and social beliefs and customs that have outgrown their time and usage, and cannot stand the test of reason. By essaying to create a scientific and tolerant mentality, it aims at dispensing with superstition and raising the level of culture and literacy among the people. But we shall trace later why, in such a pursuit, Rationalism comes into direct conflict with Religion.

Religion, as is popularly conceived, takes its stand on blind faith and forbids criticism or use of reason. Faith is essentially a lie. We are asked to believe an assumption or an event which we *know* is not true. There is no need of faith in believing that two and two make four, or to believe in any of the theorems of Euclid, because they are irrefutable facts. Religion in its very nature is opposed to Rationalism. "While standing historically for a reasoned protest against the imposition of opinion by authority, it today stands actually for a definitely anti-religious mental attitude." Rationalists claim the right to subject all religious beliefs to the test of Reason and further claim that when so tested, they break down hopelessly. Rationalists never denied the existence of mind, but refuse to agree that it is something apart from the brain or body. There is no thought without brain. Due to the prevalent misconception of Materialism, rationalists are asked to explain mind in terms of physics and chemistry, which they never claimed to do. Mind is a psychological phenomenon. Physical phenomena give the conditions for the appearance of chemical phenomena; chemical and physical phe-

nomena, the conditions for biological phenomena; physical, chemical and biological for the appearance of psychological phenomena. As life arises at a certain point in the evolution of matter, so thought and consciousness arise when evolution of living matter reaches the complexity of organization necessary for its production. Rationalists see nothing mysterious in this.

* * * *

Coming back to the question of God as a force, some religionists assert that in the process of evolution, they see the existence of a "Force." To argue that "Matter" is not ultimate but is a product of something else, the whole being the result of mechanical process, is only turning materialism out of the window and opening the door wide open for its re-admission. What this form of theistic argument does is to bring God within the category of a natural force operating in a fixed, definite and calculable manner. This idea of God lacks the essential characteristics of a God—personality and intelligence. So far as Materialism is concerned it is a matter of complete indifference by what name we call the stuff of the universe—whether we call it existence, matter, spirit or merely X.

* * * *

But the most superficial observation of recent happenings shows that there is a tendency to return to the ethics of the

jungle. There are millions among the fairly educated class who believe in a "jealous and revengeful God" and most of the activities of man are actuated by sentiment rather than by reason. It is only due to the arduous work of Free-Thinkers throughout the ages that the world to-day enjoys a certain amount of intellectual honesty and liberty. For two milleniums the world slumbered under the age of Faith, the age in which Religion triumphed. It saw the Inquisition, Slavery and all forms of social retrogression and triumph of decadent thought, until such men as Voltaire, Zola, Rousseau, and Spinoza and a host of other liberators of the human intellect came forward to rescue humanity from the clutches of superstition, and the gloom of the Dark Ages. The future historian will pay tribute to the heroic efforts of Rationalists, who, in the face of every calumny, discouragement and persecution, devoted their lives without hope of fame or fortune to the spreading of enlightenment and knowledge throughout the world. It invariably has been the lot of Free-thinkers to be 'crucified when living and deified when dead', as can be seen from the lives of all great reformers.

(I am indebted to Mr. Chapman Cohen's 'Grammar of Free-thought' and 'Materialism Restated' for most of these ideas.—A. Solomon.)

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

BY

Dr. C. L. D'AVOINE

Another murder due to Mahomedan fanaticism has just been perpetrated in India. This time, the unfortunate victim is a European lady by name Miss Elizabeth Grace Browne, M.A., L.T., Head-Mistress of the Sultania's Girls' High School, Bhopal. This becomes the fifth or sixth such murder within two years!

The poor woman was murdered in the open street while on her way to attend a lecture in the Alexandra High School, Bhopal. The murderer, who has been apprehended, is a Mahomedan who nursed a grievance against the Head-Mistress on account of an unjust accusation against her made by some local Mahome-

dans. She was accused of having thrown in the waste paper basket a few torn leaves of the Koran. On inquiry this proved to be unfounded. Though innocent, she was savagely attacked by a fanatic who evidently did not believe that she was innocent of the charge against her.

* * *

We have often commented in these columns on the sort of crime which is becoming too frequent in India. Innocent people have been murdered by Mahomedan fanatics in places so far apart as Karachi, Madras, Lahore, Calcutta, and in other parts of India for alleged affront to their Prophet. This time it is on account of alleged affront to their "Holy" book. It is time that well-meaning and sincere Mahomedans bestirred themselves to convince their zealous, but ignorant co-religionists that such acts for their religion are savage and are condemned by Islamism; at least, so we are always told by educated Mahomedans. If steps are not taken to curb such barbarism and fanaticism, one must assume that Islamism breeds fanaticism of the worst kind. A learned Mahomedan friend of the writer assures him that this sort of crime, so common here in these days, only happens in India and nowhere else in Mahomedan countries.

It is really strange that religion has such a hold on Indians in general and demoralizes so many of them. Though it is true that only Mahomedans of a fanatical tendency go to the extent of murdering people for the sake of their religion, it is none the less true that the religious susceptibilities and feelings of Indians, be they Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis or Christians, are easily wounded for mere trifles. The Government of Bhopal has expressed its indignation and sorrow at such a crime.

* * *

In India, religious belief among all classes is not so much a question of personal conviction as the belief that prevails in one's community and environment. It

would appear that in certain environments in India, religious belief is still in such a primitive stage that people believe religion is above criticism and any affront or disparaging remark about the founder of the creed professed or the "Holy" Book venerated must be atoned by death. On religious questions people in India seem to be more loyalists than the King. People who commit such murders must be aware of the end that awaits them; still they do it, probably being fortified by the belief that such dastardly deeds ensure their heavenly reward and bliss!

In no country in the world are religious bigotry, intolerance and fanaticism so widespread as in India. This, in itself, is a sure sign of degeneracy.

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In "The Mount Magazine" for November, 1937, a Madras publication, edited by Mr. V. Kalidas, there is an arresting article on "Religion and Superstition" in India, by Mr. M. N. Roy, which we hope may be reproduced in "Reason". Mr. Roy has written to the point and has given a true picture of what religion and superstition are in India.

* * *

An interesting debate on the necessity or not of Birth Control in India was held at the Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Hall, Bombay, on the 3rd December, 1937. There was a large attendance which shows that the subject now interests the public more than before. Lt-Colonel Jalal Shah, I.M.S., Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and Miss Kapila Khandwalla supported the proposition, while Messrs. Correa-Alfonso, A Soares and Shimoga opposed it. Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai, the well-known lawyer, presided. Lt-Colonel Jalal Shah stressed the medical point of view on the necessity of Birth Control and brought convincing arguments in support of the same. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta spoke on the economic point of view and the disadvantages of over-population in the welfare of a nation, while Miss Khandwalla spoke from the point of view of mothers who were obliged to bear child-

ren against their wish and capacity. Mr. A. Soares tried to show that if the land was made to produce more than at present, there would be no necessity for Birth Control. Mr. Shimoga saw a sinister design in the movement to decrease population in India while in England they were anxious for more babies. Mr. Correa-Alfonso talked a lot of nonsense and depended more on rhetoric than sound argument to convince the House. On being put to vote, the resolution was carried.

* * *

Dr. Lawrence E. Browne, a Methodist Minister, speaking before the Modern Churchmen's Conference, among other things said:—"Science too often scoffed at religion during the last century. Fortunately nowadays scientists are rarely the enemies of true religion". One is inclined to agree with Dr. Browne, for scientists, in effect, could not be the enemies of a thing that never existed. What really is true religion? Has such a thing ever existed? Religionists of the type of Dr. Browne are anxious to assure their ignorant followers that there is no longer any conflict between religion and science, which is pure quibbling!

* * *

The new Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bombay arrived recently from Europe and was given a warm welcome by the local Catholics. Addressing them from the steps of his throne, he thanked them for the cordial welcome they gave him, and he also remarked that what he had seen in the short time of his stay in the city had impressed him much. He had nothing but praise to offer for the faith and devotion of the Catholics of Bombay. The attendance at a morning Mass, at which he had been present, seemed wonderful to him, and what particularly impressed him had been the number of men in the congregation at the mass. "This", he said, "was a thing, unfortunately, becoming more and more rare, and Bombay", he added, "was giving a real example to the world in its devotion". Had the Archbishop seen the

fuss that another community made about its religious leader a few days before the Archbishop reached Bombay and the tremendous ovations that religious heads of other communities receive when they come to Bombay, he would realize that the peoples of Bombay specialize in giving warm welcomes to religious leaders.

As regards the Bombay Catholics, one wonders whether the remark of the Archbishop was a compliment to them or a certificate of their backwardness and stupidity in running as they still do after priests. It is good that a prelate recently arrived from Europe told them that men, in other parts of the world, were abandoning the Church, a statement they would probably not have believed if told by any other person. Because this is India, the writer can assure the Bombay Catholic clergy that for many years to come they can count on the devotion of the Bombay Catholics—Light penetrates very slowly in India.

* * * *

It is with great indignation that we learn of the contemptible intolerance of

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the Roman Catholic Clergy in England who are urging their people and the authorities to oppose the holding of the International Congress of Freethinkers in London in September, 1938. Father Woodlock, a Jesuit, is at the head of this movement and he is also urging Christians of other denominations to do the same. So far he has succeeded in enlisting a few bigoted Protestants to his banner. The Catholic Press in England is resorting to its usual weapon, namely, unashamed lies and misrepresentations to raise prejudice against the Congress. As a matter of fact, the Catholic Clergy and their press, in a country where they themselves enjoy a good deal of undeserved liberty and tolerance, are insinuating that it is going to be a Congress of Bolsheviks and Communists, knowing, as they do, the hatred and dislike of the British Aristocracy and Government for Bolshevism and Communism. It is remarkable that the Belgian Catholics are doing the same thing in Belgium where a Congress of Freethinkers is going to take place some time next year.

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If any other body interferes with Catholics in this manner, they would raise a hue and cry and call it persecution and intolerance. There are people, even among Rationalists, who imagine that Catholic priests are no longer the intolerable and mischievous lot they were years ago. They forget that it is impossible for the leopard to change its spots. The Roman Catholic clergy, wherever they may be, will always remain the bigoted, fanatical and intolerant lot they are, and the mistake the world is making, particularly England, is to allow them too much latitude and freedom. One is glad to note that people in England are just realizing that the Roman Catholic priests and nuns have been allowed too much liberty and freedom. Some Societies are being formed there to watch their movements and oppose them. Sooner or later, the arrogance and insolence of these priests are bound to attract serious attention.

Whatever may be the faults of Hitler, one may almost praise him for the manner he is dealing with this very undesirable sect.

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The "Times of India," the "Bombay Sentinel" and the "Sunday Standard," opened their columns for controversy on Darwinism and Rationalism. Though in the opinion of the present writer the correspondence columns of a newspaper is not the proper place for discussing such subjects, the newspapers mentioned were very liberal in allowing as much as possibly could be said on the subjects in their columns. The Anti-Darwinists were easily routed and the Anti-Rationalists proved to be a lot of semi-educated fellows who did not appear to understand what Rationalism is. It is remarkable that most, if not all of them, were Roman Catholics who imagined they were competent enough to attack Rationalism and Darwinism. When challenged to meet the representatives of the Rationalist Association of India in a public debate on Darwinism and Rationalism, not one of them accepted, though the attack on those two subjects began at a local Catholic Institute, where some Jesuit priests and their lay supporters gave lectures to uphold their creed, and deride such questions as Darwinism and Rationalism.

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One of the boldest claims ever made by Catholic priests is the authenticity of the so-called "Holy Shroud" of Turin. This is a piece of linen about 14 feet in length which bears some imprints which are supposed to have been made by the body of Christ in his tomb, as it is said that the linen was the shroud in which Jesus was buried.

Since the last 39 years, that linen, which was previously preserved in Turin, has been subjected to several photographic experiments conducted by experts. It is claimed that the experiments reveal that it is a negative imprint of a human body showing wonderful details. These are believed to be the imprints of the

wounds, crown of thorns and other features which the body of Christ received during his passion as depicted in the Gospels.

As long ago as 1902, a paper on the subject was read before the Academy of Science of Paris by Professor Vignon, a Professor of Biology, at the Catholic Institute of Paris. Professor Vignon is a strong supporter of the theory that it is the authentic shroud of Christ and cannot be anything else. He opines that since photography was unknown during the time of Christ, no artist could have faked a negative picture as this is impossible and has never been done even now that photography is known.

In the article published in "Scientific American" for March, 1937, Professor Vignon advances other reasons why this shroud is authentic. He even goes to the extent of claiming that the shroud testifies to the Resurrection. As regards the cause of the imprint which on being photographed showed the picture of a human body, it is claimed that it could have been caused by the ammoniacal vapours arising from the perspiration of Christ acting on the aloe-soaked linen of the shroud. "Aloe Socotrina" is believed to be one of the ingredients used in the

burial of Christ, according to the customs of those days.

* * * *

The present writer remembers reading an article in one of the English magazines many, many years ago on this very subject. It gave a lengthy story of the history of that shroud and how it was actually fabricated. It was, it would appear, manufactured by some cunning monks in a monastery near Chambery, France, about the year 1500. It is only just to state that the editor of the "Scientific American", while publishing Professor Vignon's article, mentions several publications which have exposed the fraud about this so-called shroud. As regards the contention that no negative picture has ever been painted, perhaps some expert photographers may not agree with this. Would it not be possible, for instance, for a clever artist to take a cast of a statue and extend it carefully on the reverse and paint the same?

It must be remembered that the fabrication of holy relics was a lucrative industry for monks and priests in the days gone by. Such pious frauds were shamelessly done and even today a good deal of money is made in this kind of business.

RELIGION AND CONDUCT

BY

R. N. AIYAR

The term "Religion" has been, from time immemorial, one that has affected and moulded the destinies and civilisations of human races as nothing else in the history of mankind has been able to do. The idea of a personal, supernatural God, ever watching over and protecting the interests of all earthly creatures, which this official organised religion of the orthodox implies and elaborates, the idea of a divine Father anxiously watching the activities of his children at work and at play, this idea, I repeat, unfortu-

nately rooted in the minds of many of us, has been, strangely enough, the battlefield on which many a bloody war has been mercilessly waged in the name of religion and many a vehement controversy has raged till the present day. The savage wars seem to have ended, to judge from the pages of modern history; but the ceaseless controversy shows no sign of having subsided or subsiding. If only the pages of past religious history were well scrutinised with enough intellectual honesty and freedom in the light

of accumulated human experience, the irresistible conclusion will be forced on one's unprejudiced mind that there has been, to put it mildly, more of untruth than of solid sober truth in them. "Religion", in its conventional supernatural sense, has been, I deny not, the bulwark of the vast majority of mankind from the earliest known times to the present. But this seemingly universal belief in it in one form or another need not constitute any proof of its validity as a supernatural revelation from God or as a direct inspiration from heaven. This pathetic faith or belief in the tenets or texts of so-called holy scriptures of the world is in itself an interesting study in the psychology of one's habits and outlooks—If analysed, the roots of this wide-spread belief, belief born of centuries after centuries of certain stereotyped habits of looking at things and interpreting them conveniently and easily in accordance with one's tastes and leanings, can be laid bare in their natural simplicity and nakedness. I say "natural" deliberately, because at bottom there is, and can be, nothing apart from it. What is not seen as "natural" on the surface and at first glance, we simply label as "supernatural" and hang on to it with infinite pathos. A thorough examination and analysis of the thing in a cool and unemotional frame of mind will dispel the illusion of supernaturalness and will soon put us in possession of facts, valuable, if hard and unpalatable, that will in time emerge as a well-linked chain operated by the law of causation. Though there is all the difference in the world between an oak tree and the tiny seed out of which it has grown to such gigantic proportions, the former has only developed from the latter under various influences and through various stages. If really we would know the truth about the tree, we SHOULD know the nature of its seed and its ways of growing "evolving" (in the language of the evolutionist) under the influence of natural forces, such as heat, light, moisture, air etc.

We can therefore safely do away with the meaningless speculative "supernatural" and have the significant verifiable "natural" in its place for solving almost all our difficulties connected with the question of belief. As official orthodox religion is mostly an embodiment of supernaturalism and its many doctrines and dogmas, we have now to know and decide how much of valuable truth (truth that can be verified by evidence and experience) there can possibly be in it and how much of chaff also there is very likely to be found mixed up with it. The chaff, though always very misleading and sometimes very pernicious, is seen to serve some useful purpose in the daily affairs of orthodox believers; it is, they say, somewhat attractive, tempting, comforting and consoling!

The ethical side of this so-called supernatural religion is also worth discussing, because our behaviour in general, that is our MORAL attitude towards our fellow-men and other creatures, the scriptures enjoin, is to be modelled on the pattern set forth and put down in them by men who saw or seem to have foreseen the need (as they took it to be) for comfort and consolation in times of distress or bereavement in life. We are asked bluntly and authoritatively to refrain from lying or stealing or drinking or killing or kidnapping another's wife, simply and solely because, they positively declare, it is God's will that we should

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curb ourselves thus and for no other earthly reasons, expressed or implied.

Religion, in its orthodox and limited sense, is ordinarily defined as a belief in the existence of an Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient God, embodied or ethereal and formless, that is ever ready to hear and answer the prayers of such of his children as believe in him fully, irrespective of anything else. It is also interpreted as a docile acquiescence in the peremptory commands contained in holy literatures, an implicit faith in the veracity and authority of stiff-necked dogmas and stultifying doctrines, a sort of faith that looks upon interrogation as a sin or an attack upon it as rank heresy, punishable, not on this material and all-important earth where the actual tragedies and comedies of life's eternal drama are being enacted every moment, but in the unknown and problematical "hell", the horrible domain of "sinners" in general. I do not understand what these orthodox people really and seriously mean by "sin" and its sure punishment in another sphere, which may be a hallucination after all. I do not also see the necessity of holding out this empty threat to poor ignorant folk in order to make them behave straight and well. Is our conduct in life solely to be shaped, purified and perfected only with the use of such meaningless threats? Is there not to be found in the vast and increasing store of human experience sufficient inducement to make erring mortals go the narrow path of correct behaviour? What are "virtue" and "vice" after all? Are there any absolute standards of good and bad behaviour independent of their effects on the well-being of human society? Is not the question of "virtue" or "vice" a purely relative one after all? Are the codes of morality of the various nations of the world the same and uniform throughout? What is looked upon as righteous by one nation is regarded as sinful by another. The ethical significance of every thought,

word or act of a human being varying thus widely in various countries and ages, it behoves every one of us to look into this question well, from an intelligent commonsense standpoint, in the light of the enormous changes that have come over our notions of good and bad and the values we have come to place upon the moral dicta found laid down in holy and "inspired" literatures. The ultimate test of a good thing or a bad one seems to be its immediate or remote effect on the welfare of human society whether it tends to help it in its onward march or to hinder it. If it tends to hamper it in its slow evolution to a better state, then it is very likely that it is bad; if, on the other hand, it tends to facilitate or quicken that evolution along right lines, then we may be sure that it is good. In other words, an immoral act is always destructive, disintegrating, and a moral one may be taken as one operating the other opposite way.

(To be continued).

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REASON

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**The Annual General Meeting of the
Rationalist Association of India will be
held on Sunday, January 9, 1938 at
5.30 p.m. at "Buona Cassa" opp. Mer-
cantile Insurance Co., Sir Phirozsha Mehta
Road, Fort, Bombay.**

**The meeting will be followed by
light refreshments and music. Prof.
James Bartley, B.A. (Belfast) of Elphin-**

**stone College, will speak on "The Ra-
tional Outlook on Literature.**

Tickets Re. 1/- each at the entrance.

At the Secretaries' Table.

There is just time to remind mem-
bers of the General Meeting to be held
on the 9th of this month. Please note that
it is not to be held at the place previously
announced in the December issue of
Reason.

We hope members will make it a
point to attend the Social which will
follow and also bring along with them
those of their friends who are interested
in our movement.

Times are changing—or rather, one
should say 'minds.' During the last
three months we had much controversy
in local papers. Attacks on freethinkers
and atheists and also support from an
unexpected number of readers. Or, is
the press censorship relaxing a bit?

But no, as we said minds are chang-
ing, some of our members and contribu-
tors whose articles used to be refused
only a few years ago by some journals,
are now being requested to write for their
"new year numbers" and "double num-
bers"

As we go to press we hear that "The
Life of Emile Zola" is to be a Christmas
attraction at one of the theatres in Bom-
bay. The life of an avowed freethinker
on Christmas Day. What are we com-
ing to anyway?

But evidently there is not much
cause for alarm. The newly arrived
Bishop of Bombay is quite satisfied with
the congregations in churches here and
there is no need to bother about "empty
Pews"—so soon.

That reminds us that we must in-
crease our activities and this year we hope
to. It is only when we have a strong
organization of rationalists in this country
that we can hope to check the organised

forces of irrationalism, superstition and bigotry which threaten to overwhelm us.

Therefore let every member determine to see that the Reserve Fund is completed by the end of 1938, so that the R.A.I. can immediately embark on an elaborate programme of lectures, issuing pamphlets and other constructive activities. There are workers ready to work; it is for our generous friends to come forward and help.

In the meantime we find that again this year we shall have to depend on the generosity of our members to balance our budget. We therefore request them to send us donations to enable us to meet current expenses.

It has been decided by the Executive Committee of the R.A.I. and the Editorial Board, pending of course, the formal consent of the General body to make **Reason** a bimonthly containing thirty pages and priced at three annas.

Among the scientists who have come to India to attend the jubilee session of the Indian Science Congress to be held in Calcutta this month is Prof. F. A. E. Crew, Director of the Institute of Animal Genetics of Edinburgh University. Just before leaving England he delivered a lecture at Glasgow for the Rationalist Press Association on "Biological" Science and the new Social Order."

Prof. Ernest Barker, Professor of Political Science in the University of Cambridge, also one of the party, is of opinion that the Indian people have too critical an intellect to tolerate a dictatorship. We beg to differ. If that was so, India would not be the credulous victim of religious fanaticism it is to-day. We thank Prof. Barker for the compliment, but unfortunately our observation of facts contradicts his statement.

Abraham Solomon.
Jt. Hon. Secretary.

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CORONATION

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

*Editor of the Freethinker and President of the
National Secular Society, London.*

(Due to the several requests of members and readers
we are reproducing the whole article as a supplement.)

CORONATION

(REPRODUCED FROM FREE THINKER).

By CHAPMAN COHEN

God Save the King.

Many people are under the impression that the Coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey is an essential part of the function of creating a King of Great Britain. This is altogether wrong. Whatever the character of the King or the wisdom of hereditary succession, the new King is there the moment the old King dies, or abdicates, and functions fully so soon as he has taken the accession oath as prescribed by law. The people living have nothing to do with it, Parliament—until it passes a law altering the method of creating a King—has nothing to do with it. One King automatically follows another. Edward VIII. was King the moment George V. died. George VI. became King the moment Edward VIII. abdicated. He was not even King by "the grace of God"—that comes later, at Westminster Abbey. The throne is never vacant; the country is never without a King; and when the accession oath is taken, the installation of the new King is complete. Nothing is added to the **earthly** and **human** character of the King by the Coronation Service. What the Coronation Service does is an altogether distinct thing. If it never occurred, George VI. would be no less King of England than he is to-day. It is necessary to bear this consideration in mind, properly to understand what follows.

But I must point out that while the King in his secular aspect is an elected King, he is not elected by the people of to-day. The wisdom of our ancestors in 1688 determined who should be King in 1937, as well as who should reign before and after that date. The people living at any time after 1688, as Edmund Burke explained, have nothing whatever to do with it—the King is King, "in contempt of their choice." This relieving of the people of the power to choose a King, when one looks at the character,

mental and moral, of many of our Kings since the Act of Settlement, certainly clears them of a heavy responsibility. But in the opinion of our ancestors of 1688 the office of the King was too important for contemporary peoples to decide who should fill it. We owe George VI., as we owed Edward VIII, and previous monarchs, to the spiritual vision of the Government of 1688, a Government that was not very remarkable for wisdom in any other direction. No Government in these degenerate days would dare to lay down rules in perpetuity for the clearing of garbage from the streets; the greater should be our admiration for the supreme wisdom of these people of 1688 for their prescience and courage in so admirably arranging for the Kings of all future times, and for the head of an Empire long before that Empire comes into existence. When we have this example of foresight before us, a foresight which on our own confession, makes us the best people in the world, with the best country in the world, the best judges in the world, and the finest Government in the world—without which we might become as are the poor French or American people—there is little ground for anyone objecting to the marvels of Biblical prophecy.

* * * *

The Coronation

We must then get completely out of our heads the idea that the Coronation service has any essential connexion with the recognition of the King, or with the creating of the King. In the proper sense of the word he does not represent the people at all, for representation implies appointment, and the King of England is not appointed by any person or by any group of persons now living. He stands for that kind of representation which existed in the days of "pocket boroughs." The "shot" of the district decided who

was to "represent" the constituency in Parliament, and it was the duty of the people so represented to applaud the selection. The only people the King can be said to represent are those who lived in 1688. Our duty as loyal, intelligent citizens is to applaud their choice, and to admire their foresight in the unavowed assumption that the people of subsequent times could not be trusted to choose for themselves. But the performance at Westminster Abbey, with the theatrical rehearsal of all the actors, from the principals down to the horses, adds nothing whatever to the status or power of the King as head of the State.

The Coronation, as the Archbishops and bishops have taken great pains to assure us, is a purely magical ceremony. It converts the King who is, until the Coronation, a mere man, into the voice of God, to whom the peers and people promise "earthly worship." There are certain material considerations connected with it, and which a cunning priesthood takes care are always present. But omitting the promise of the King to "preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, all . . . rights and privileges," without which the Archbishop would wash his hands of the whole business, the essence of the whole performance is the repetition of the very primitive ceremony of converting the King into an incarnation of the tribal god. It is found in use to-day among primitive peoples, and the essentials of the Westminster Coronation service may actually be found in the tribal ceremonies of the Fiji Islanders.

* * *

A Royal Gallery

We are trying to understand by what method a Royal Family which, a little more than a century ago, actually stood lower than any other Royal Family has ever stood in this country, finds its recent representatives almost deified. Never did a succession of monarchs offer less promising material for this transformation than did the House of Bruns-

wick, now the House of Windsor. From George I. to William IV. they were treated with contempt by the larger portion of the inhabitants, and some of the brightest names in the literature and public life of their times made no secret of their feelings. The first George was unable to speak English, and was noted for his taste for elderly and ugly mistresses. No one has claimed that George II., III., IV., and William IV., stood very high in the estimation of the people. Dr. Johnson gave it as his opinion that if a vote of the country were taken the people would recall the Stuarts. And, indeed, Charles II. and William III. were the last English monarchs in this country for whom one could feel any genuine intellectual respect. The author of *Coronation Commentary*, which makes out as good a case for the Royal Family as can be done with decency, and which follows the plan of saying all that can be said against Edward VIII. with the design of exciting sympathy for his successor, says of the standing of male members of the Royal Family at the beginning of the nineteenth century: —

Their country loathed them for their sordid and quarrelsome lives; their vices, their venality; their debts which an impoverished and over-taxed nation had to pay, and pay, and pay again; for their brutal reactionary politics. The Duke of Wellington declared that the Royal Dukes had "insulted, personally insulted two-thirds of the gentlemen of England," and that they were "the damnedest mill-stones about the neck of any Government that could be imagined." To the common people, to moderate decent men, to idealists like Godwin and Shelley, they made it nightmare plain that royalty was tyranny, oppression, beastliness.

May be the Prince of Wales had taste and charm; the Duke of York courage, the Dukes of Clarence and Kent good nature; the Duke of Cumberland, the horrible one-eyed man with the moustaches, ability. In the eyes of

the English people they were a crew of thieves, bullies, scoundrels, sots and rakes.

And of George IV: —

Unlike the rest of the Hanoverians he was a coward. To his people the first gentleman in Europe looked more like its last blackguard. On his gross person he spent literally millions of the country's money. He betrayed the liberalism he had affected. He was fat, false, bestially selfish, dissolute, drunken. He was hated savagely. The best proof of his frightful unpopularity is that he could confer a measure of popularity on so frightful a person as his wife.

Despite even George the Fourth the throne survived. William the Fourth inspired less hatred than his brother—he was a friendly old fool, and doted on his ten illegitimate children—but not more respected. His half-daft speeches were the terror of the ministry and the joke of the country, while behind him loomed the shape of the ogreish Duke of Cumberland, who might well become the next King; whose accession, commented a member of the upper class, would be the occasion for suppressing the post altogether. King Billy was jeered at in public, hooted and pelted as he came back from the play.

At the beginning of Victoria's reign the outlook was not very promising for the monarchy. She was too young to have scandals connected with her name, but her mother bore none too good a character, and later the prudery of the time was angered over the fact that the Prince Consort's mother had been divorced. Victoria began her reign burdened with the character of her family, and the traditions of the last five English Kings, and it was openly said in all sorts of directions that the days of the English monarchy were numbered. One of Victoria's achievements was that of commencing as a very poor woman and end-

ing her life as, reputedly, one of the wealthiest women in Europe. Certainly the time had not arrived when the semi-deification of the King was possible. In any case the deification of a Queen was impossible, minus a King. In the primitive form of the Coronation of a chief, it is, as we shall see, the **man** that is the first figure.

Of course the same Coronation Service was in use. Nearly every paper in the country, to say nothing of the heads of the church, has reminded the people that the Coronation Service remains unchanged in substance, and goes back a thousand years in our history. The "thousand years" is an unusual piece of modesty on the part of the priesthood. It goes back for hundreds of thousands of years. It comes to us direct from the jungle; and but for the greater cost, the glittering diamonds and the claim to be cultured by those taking part in the ceremony, through the silk and satins of the women, and the gorgeous pantomimic dress of the King and the peers, Westminster Abbey is repeating the ceremony by which the primitive King assumed the power to send rain, to make the earth fertile, and to give his people victory in war.

We are trying to determine the extent to which a professedly civilized country has been led to the semi-deification of its King, and to indicate some of the causes that have contributed to this result. Of the fact there can be no question. Not for centuries has the religious aspect of the Kingship been so emphasized, and nowhere save amongst uncivilized peoples has the King as chief and semi-medicine-man of the tribe been so publicly connected. It may be only a straw, that indicates the flow of the stream, but we invite a recollection of the number of recent occasions on which that embodiment of cunning ecclesiasticism, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has been present with the existing King on public occasions. Even at a semi-political gathering such as the luncheon of the

Commonwealth premiers, the Archbishop occupied a prominent place.

It is not easy to date the beginning of a historic phase, but a starting point may be fixed with the date of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. She had a long reign, and by mere length of living, had become an institution. Further and a more important factor in the bemusement of the public mind, her reign coincided with an enormous development of British-governed territory and of the national wealth. The long reign tended to make the country forget the character of her predecessors (in any case a woman cannot lead the openly vicious life of a man) and the growth in wealth and possessions induced people, in the true spirit of the god-king worshippers, to place the development of the country to the credit of the throne. This tendency to deification was always there, but a knowledge of social psychology hardly existed, and the "transference" was an easy one.

Victoria's Jubilee marked the opening of a period of Imperialism, Militarism and King-worship, and after Victoria's death the game was played with cunning, skill and persistency. On every occasion the Royal Family was kept well in the limelight, not merely the monarch, but every one who was in the line of succession. No matter how trivial the occasion, or how **unpremeditated** the visit to a curiosity shop, or how **accidental** the King's or Queen's conversation with a working-man or woman, a picture in the papers was bound to appear. The most common place remarks were duly hailed and reported as exhibitions of profound wisdom, or illustrations of human feeling that were remarkable—in a Royal Family. The most commonplace action was hailed as though a new cosmic wonder had been discovered. The god chief had come down to the level of ordinary decent humanity. Those who did not worship royalty expected from it the same degree of sense of speech and decency of action as was found with ordinary folk. It was their worshippers

who were astounded when it came. It is just as surprising to discover that a God is a man as it is to discover that a man is a god.

Never has a Royal Family been so persistently, so carefully, advertised. Even the babies were used to exploit the sentimentality of the British public. Enlarged pictures were published of the eldest baby of the Duke of Kent, giving prominence to his first tooth. If that tooth could be preserved it might rival the preserved footmark of the Buddha, and would rank with the cigar which a certain peer has preserved in a special cabinet for the adoration of his descendants—the cigar was given him by Edward VII. A life of the Princess Elizabeth was published when she was six years of age, and sold by the thousand. After the Jubilee of George V. the **Daily Telegraph** and the **Times** published letters suggesting that there was more than mere coincidence in the spell of fine weather which ended with the Jubilee. After the death of George V, a biography of his dogs was published, and many pictures of his favourite pony; and when, some six months after, his favourite parrot died, it was promptly stuffed and sent to the Natural History Museum at Kensington. If the chairs upon which George had sat could have been cut into splinters and sold at a good price, they might have found the Chancellor the money for re-armament. We seemed to be getting back rapidly to the food-producing, rain-giving, victory-bestowing god-king, and one began to have a keener appreciation of the relic-worship of the Church, and the veneration of saints. Between the advertising methods of the American film star, and those used for the Royal Family, the difference does not seem very great. At any rate one appears to be getting right back to the frame of mind which dominates the Fiji Islanders and the primitive African tribes with regard to their chiefs.

* * *

The God-Man

The gap between ourselves and pre-historic man was lessened considerably when the Archbishop of Canterbury and other prominent divines began to emphasize the magical character of the Coronation and to sound the "Recall to Religion." There was an added motive here. The Archbishop had in January, 1936, commended Edward VIII. to the British Empire on the grounds of his personal knowledge of his character from boyhood. At the end of the year he had discovered that Edward was quite unfit for the post of King, on the avowed grounds of his dissolute acquaintances—well-known to the Archbishop all along—and because he wished to marry Mrs. Simpson. Had Edward concealed his intentions in this direction the Archbishop would have duly transformed him into an incarnation of the voice of God, and if Edward had lived with Mrs. Simpson instead of suggesting marriage, the Archbishop would have no more denounced occupants of the throne for similar conduct. The time therefore seemed to have come when the magico-religious nature of Coronation might be emphasised and so assist a revival of religion. And of the Coronation might be emphasised, it has been done with a thoroughness that no body of Churchmen has dared to do for centuries. Bearing in mind what I said before that from the secular point of view, the Coronation adds nothing whatever to the status or power of the King, we may take two or three leading utterances. First the Archbishop of Canterbury:—

The consecration of the crowning of the King and Queen (is) a great religious act. . . . In his Coronation and crowning the King. . . . is the representative of his people. . . . They associate themselves with him in a great act of consecration to the service of God.

The Archbishop of York says, the Coronation ceremony

is the dedication of the King and of his consort to the service of the King

of Kings. *The King incarnates the community.*

The italics in the last quotation are mine. I agree with it entirely. It is the essence of the Coronation ceremony and takes us back to the anthropology of the subject, with which I will deal later. It is the primitive idea that the chief not merely incarnates the "mana" of the community, but that he also incarnates the tribal joss. He is selected by God (as the Pope is selected by God through the inspiration received by the college of cardinals) as the chief medicine-man among savages "smells out" the one who is to embody the tribal deity.

Canon Anthony, of St. George's Windsor, says:—

The King was meant to be the human symbol of Divine Power. . . .

(He) is God's minister typifying the twin ideas of the Divine authority and the Divine guardianship. The English Sovereign is no mere figurehead or State official.

The Bishop of Peterborough:—

The Coronation is a religious ceremony throughout. By it we believe that the King receives the grace of God by which alone he can execute his office.

Here it is, as plainly put as it can possibly be. The intensive advertising of the past fifty years has not been without results. We do not have it openly said the King is King by divine right, but it has always been there in the Coronation Service, which, so far as Kinghood is concerned, is a magical ceremony or nothing. Nothing has, in form, been added; the only new phase is that never since the time of the first Stuart Kings have any of our "spiritual" leaders had the impudence to proclaim so plainly the deification of the King. I shall have to return to this incarnation of the God in the King later. At present it is necessary only to note that there is in this, expressed, in unmistakable words, one of the oldest beliefs in the history of the social life of man. Among the Shiluks of the White

Nile, it is an article of faith that the spirit of the god is incarnate in the chief. Among the ancient Mexicans the King was worshipped as a god, and one of his duties was to take an oath that he would cause the rain to come, the sun to shine, and the earth to be fertile. Even with the existing Japanese, the Mikado is officially the descendant of the gods.

What difference in kind is there between these things, and the declarations of the Archbishops and Bishops, and the whole tone of the Coronation Service? The only difference is that the modern ceremony is more expensive, the people are more showily dressed, and the spectators consider themselves the cream of British culture; in every other respect the thing is direct from the jungle. With a fine ignorance (real or pretended) of history, literature and science, Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith, writing in the **Daily Telegraph** for May 7, says that a spectator of the Coronation,

looking down the vistas of the past might, in imagination, see a line of Kings reaching back to Saxon Egbert in 785, the Coronation Service hardly changed from that to-day.

The imaginary spectator **might**—if he knew as little about the subject as Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith appears to know. If he really understood what he was looking at he would probably reflect:—

How little mankind understands, how slowly it learns! Looking down the vistas of the past, whether in terms of years or in terms of cultural development, here is a ceremony that runs back to a time when the god-king was believed to be responsible for the stability of nature and the welfare of man. Looking through the outward trappings, here is the savage ceremony wherein the King is endowed with divine power, and becomes an incarnation of the deity. Westminster Abbey has, in principle advanced not a step beyond the jungle. In this ceremony the King, the Courtiers, the Christian hierarchy join hands with

their spiritual brethren in primitive Australia, in the African forest, and with the culture of the Stone Age.

The Clergy have shown their hands. Cunning, but not possessed of a far-seeing intelligence, they have spoken more plainly than they have dared to do for centuries. They invite plain speech in reply. We must see that they get it.

* * *

A Very Ancient Magic

I must admit that the Clergy are speaking by the book. They are right, so far, in assuming that the King, whether he be a fool or a rogue, a debauchee or a monument of virtue, is by the application of the magical "holy oil" lifted out of the common ranks of mankind. Holy oil has always played a part in transforming episodes. Readers of Apuleius, will remember how, in the **Golden Ass** women are transformed into animal forms in this way. And students of witchcraft also know that it was by anointing themselves with a magic oil that women were able to assume different forms and fly through the air to have a "right royal" debauch with Satan. It is **after** the King has been transformed by this holy "Macassar" that the Archbishop declares the King has the power of God in him, and that the princes and the peers (the latter representing the people also) promise to the King "earthly worship." The incarnation is complete. Had not Edward VIII. insisted on marrying the woman he loved, had he been less open in expressing an opinion about the distressed areas, and confined himself to inspecting hospitals, looking at cup-football matches, and performing other simple public functions, he would have today had the Archbishop's blessing and would have had God incarnate in him. The gods are no respecters of persons. Their incarnations cover an extraordinary variety of individuals.

About three centuries ago a King of England was shortened by a head for acting upon the principle of the divine right of kings. There was some excuse

for Charles Stuart. The people were yet in the shadow of the Dark Ages, and but little of the real history of man was known. His people were guided by the Bible, and in the New Testament the duty of blind obedience to the King is clearly enunciated. That, too, is in the Coronation Service. In that service it is said that it is only by divine power that the King can carry out his duties. That is nonsense. The history of the past two hundred and fifty years proves that anyone can carry them out. In an hereditary monarchy no personal quality of any kind is requisite. The "people associate themselves with him in a great act of consecration to God." No one knows better than the Archbishop that this is a lie. There are millions of the King's subjects quite prepared to carry out their duties, as subjects, so long as the King carries out his part of the contract. But they do not, and will not lower their intellectual self-respect by pretending to believe in the magical ceremony of the Holy oil and wonder-working spoon. This farrago of nonsense should have no place in the appointment of a titular head of the State. Our experience of Kings has not been such as to lead us to become enamoured of this persisting Stone Age ceremony.

MAKING A GOD

I feel impelled to step aside from my task of showing the identity of the Coronation Service with the most primitive of human superstitions, in order to draw attention to certain social implications of the May 12 ceremony. In the first place, I wish to express my gratitude to those who have helped in my main task by so plainly and so persistently advertising the essentially religious nature of the Coronation Service. To the clergy I made due acknowledgement last week; so far as newspapers and writers of books are concerned, I take the following from the Daily Telegraph of May 13, as representative:—

From the moment when the King and Queen entered the theatre and made

their humble adoration to the altar.... the service offered no moment of secular intrusion.... All the leading men of Church and State.... were seen as lay servers at the altar, assisting in the great Christian rite of Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ. Nothing which went before and nothing which followed after could approach in significance the Anointing.... Without it.... he would not be a Christian King, the Lord's Anointed.... The solemnity of the silence and the prayer preceding told of the object of the Unction, the reception of the seven-fold gift of the Spirit—the Spirit of wisdom and government, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness and the Spirit of Holy Fear.

The Telegraph is absolutely correct. The moment the King entered the Abbey, he left all that we mean by education, science, and civilization behind him. The Archbishop was in command. It was all stark, unadulterated superstition decked out with diamonds and silks and furs in place of paint and feathers, with a great cathedral instead of an open "sacred" space, with the blare of trumpets and the peal of the organ in place of the beating of a "tom tom," with spectators who, by writing themselves as civilized hope to disguise the fact of their lapse into primitive savagery. I trust that those of my friends for whom the word "religion" has a fatal fascination will be reminded by the Coronation that this ceremony brings us back to the foundations of every religion in the world.

It is useless for the King, in real or affected modesty, to say that he is only an "ordinary man." He may have been that before the Coronation, but, unless the Archbishop is an imposter, he has, through the power of "holy oil" and magic spoon, endowed the King with a wisdom, divine power and knowledge, that he had not before the incantation, and produced a very different person. It is the working of a miracle we are witnessing in the Coronation. It converted

George VI into a vehicle of divine power as it converted George I, II, III and IV into persons filled with divine grace and wisdom. It is not surprising that even the staid Financial Times, in noting the Lanchester motor-car, said the present was "a particularly suitable car to review," because "the Lanchester company was formed in the year the King was born." There may be more here than meets the eye. Perhaps some drops of the "holy oil" were used for lubrication. We thank the clergy and the newspapers for making the essential nature of the Coronation Service so clear. But we wonder whether the Archbishop may not, for all his cunning, have overplayed his hand. Professedly civilized folk do not care to be so openly reminded that they are very little removed from savages.

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It Pays to Advertise

Another aspect of the situation is of a more serious kind. I referred last week to the advertising campaign that has been carried on with regard to the Royal Family ever since the Jubilee of Victoria. The Coronation of George VI, originally planned for Edward VIII, marks its apogee. Begun twelve months ago for Edward, every kind of advertising resource was employed. The Coronation itself was well staged, and the public rehearsals have been unprecedented. From the King to the horses the machinery has been laid quite bare. The public were not merely invited behind the scenes to witness the performers practicing their parts; they were asked to assist by shouting and cheering to accustom the horses to the antics of the humans. Whatever "sanctity" there was about the Coronation ought to have been wiped out by this publicity. It was pure Hollywood. The dullest might have asked themselves what would have happened if the "Holy Spirit," looking down on Westminster Abbey had endowed one of the performances who at first took the part of the King with the qualities enumerated by the "Telegraph." Or if the "Holy Spirit," becoming confused, had passed over the actual ceremony, mistak-

ing it for only another rehearsal. Which would have been worse—to have hit the wrong man or to have passed over the right one?

Surely, whatever solemnity was possible about the proceedings must have been wiped out by the tactics adopted. The solemnity became part of the show. The talk of "dignity" and "solemnity" had become mere showmen's talk. The people went out to see a gorgeous show and they got it.

* * *

Cheers, More Cheers!

There is, of course, the enthusiasm of the crowd, the long wait to see the King, and so forth—all, in newspaper jargon, impressive. But has anyone ever noted the enthusiasm of a whole town, the waving of flags, the cheers, the blowing of whistles that greets a victorious football team on its return to the "home town"? Or, the easy way in which a multitude can be brought together to witness any properly-advertised person or function. To assume that the cheering crowds, with its "We want the King!" were there out of personal love and devotion to the King is sheer nonsense. Twelve months ago the people had no greater expectation of the Duke of York becoming King than they had of Mr. de Valera occupying that position. Little more than six months ago the public was assured that Edward was the "people's idol." It was advertised that his Coronation would arouse such enthusiasm as had never before been witnessed. The Duke of York was then just a member of the Royal Family for whom the general public had no special feelings. How then could the crowds of May 12 have been animated by affection for George VI? Devotion and affection are qualities that cannot spring up in a night like Jonah's gourd. It is a degradation to imagine that affection and devotion can be ordered by an Archbishop and a Prime Minister working through the medium of newspapers. To reply that the devotion of the public was to the throne and not to its

occupant, is to admit what has already been said, that it does not matter who is King or what he is like—so long as he obeys the prescribed rules. You cannot have at the same time and in the same person a man what is no more than a symbol and who holds his place in virtue of the personal affection of the people. . . .

I also wonder whether George VI knows, or remembers a story that is told of the Duke of Wellington. During his brief career as Prime Minister, the Duke was followed home by an angry crowd. After he had entered Apsley House some stones were thrown and windows were broken. The Duke ordered them to be covered from the inside with sheets of iron. Later, when the Duke had regained his popularity a crowd again followed him home, and this time called for a speech. Standing on the steps of his house the Duke pointed in silence to the iron-sheeted windows, and in silence passed within.

* * *

The Dangers of Mass Movements

This easy manipulation of public feeling is a fact that should seriously concern students of sociology. Public passion is so easily created; it is so difficult to allay. It discounts understanding and detests the intelligent examination of a question. It has no appreciation of good and bad; it is capable only of like and dislike. It may be used for one purpose to-day and for an opposite purpose to-morrow. Admitting all that may be said in favour of a monarchy, and even of that most stupid of all devices, the hereditary succession, the fact is sun-clear that before his accession the mass of the people knew little more about the private life and character of George VI than they did of that of the Mikado of Japan. Whether ultimately justifiable or not, the enthusiasm of the Coronation crowds was machine-made. It was "mass opinion," that is, it was not opinion at all. People may move together, they may shout together; the one thing that they cannot do is to think together. Opinion exists only

so far and so long as there is an intelligent appreciation of another point of view. Without this there may be passion, there may be prejudice; there is nothing worthy of being called "opinion". Dictatorships everywhere depend upon their appeal to this "mass opinion." Crafty statesmen trade upon it, honest ones dread it; and both know that its basis is ignorance and passion.

One cannot reflect on these easily created demonstrations of public enthusiasm without serious misgivings. And when they are allied with a resurgence of the most primitive religious superstitions, the danger reaches its greatest strength. With the impudent avowal of the transformation of an 'ordinary man' into an incarnation of divine wisdom, power and holy fear, I am not now concerned. But I am concerned with the susceptibility of huge masses of people—belonging to all classes of the population—to the power of suggestion. The ease with which a Prime Minister and an Archbishop convinced the public that a constitutional crisis had developed out of the amours of a King—particularly when one remembers how much of our "old nobility" owes its existence to the amours of past Kings, is almost amusing. But they believed this fable of a constitutional crisis, as easily as in October they believed that Edward was a great King, faithfully treading in his father's footsteps, only to believe in December that he was quite unfitted for the throne.

The people have been told that part of the glory of our throne is that it sets an example of domestic life to the whole of the nation. I am not saying a word against the domestic life of the Royal Family; it may be all that is said to be. About that I neither know nor care. But I do resent that statement as an implied slur on hundreds of thousands of families in this country. However good the domestic life of the Royal Family is, it is no more than a copy of the vast majority of homes in this country. The statement I am criticizing reverses the order of things,

for the average British home was decent and admirable when, for at least six generations the domestic life of royalty was an open disgrace and a flaming scandal. It was the decency of the average British home that ultimately forced the Royal Family into conformity with it, and had that conformity not taken place, there would by now have been no Royal Family to educate or to reform. Let anyone ask himself at what period of British history, and for how long he would have wished the people to imitate the Royal Family in its domestic life, and he will agree with what I have said. The education of Kings has come from the people, and not that of the people from Kings.

It is the ease with which public opinion is swung this way and that, which almost frightens me when I reflect upon its potentiality for evil. If democracy is to last, it must be based upon something more enduring than mass-prejudice and a belief in the wisdom and power of god-endowed Kings. The creators of democracy were under no delusion on this head. They knew that real democracy must be based on intelligence, education, on a sense of personal dignity and individual strength of character. It would be well for their descendants to be equally alert to such vital considerations.

* * *

Savage And Civilized.

Modern anthropology has made us familiar with the fact that the savage in civilized man is but skin deep. But there is a certain ambiguity about that word "savage." The scientist uses it in one sense; the ordinary man uses it in another and a different sense. The scientist means by "savage" no more than "primitive," and he measures people not by a time scale, but by a scale of culture. It is a value that cannot be expressed in terms of time. A people that lived five or six thousand years ago has been more civilized than many who are living to-day. The man living on one side of you may be centuries older than your neighbour on the other side. A King may be more

primitive than a clown, the man driving a Rolls Royce car, speaking in perfect English, and dressed in the latest of fashionable clothing may indicate by the mascot he carries on his car and the ideas that lodge in his head that he is more nearly akin to the members of an African native tribe than he is to thousands of his contemporaries. The scientist deals with essentials, not with superficial differences. Those who took part in the Westminster Abbey ceremony of May 12, which involved the semi-deification of a King by a magical method that is thousands of years old, and who were impressed by its "solemnity," were by a scientific standard very primitive indeed.

On the other hand, the ordinary man when he talks of a "savage" people thinks of them as primitive certainly, but his "primitive" carries with it the notions of brutal, unthinking, illogical. And that is altogether wrong. Primitive mankind is not of necessity brutal—the bulk of them are far less deliberately brutal than are their descendants of to-day. He has fewer of the arts and comforts of civilised life, but he is also free from the influence of those inherited customs, beliefs and interests, which because they are accumulated through many ages, are at constant war with one another, and which so often lead to the brutalities and hypocrisy of civilised life. Primitive man thinks, as does modern man, and his thoughts are determined as are the thoughts of all men, by the knowledge and the understanding he has of what is going on around him. And in that connexion his thoughts are actually more logical than those of modern man. He simply could not be guilty of the downright absurdities that characterize, say, an Archbishop. Both may be doing the same things, professing the same belief, but those of the "savage" are in accord with what is understood, those of the Archbishop represent a horrible mixture of bad logic and childish inferences.

Barbarism In High Places.

In the three articles that have preceded this one I have been trying to illustrate the persistence of a whole set of primitive ideas in our institution of the kingship. Not, be it noted, in the fact of calling a chief 'king', that is a matter of political expediency, but in the sanctifying of a King, by which sanctification, via a modern medicine-man, the King becomes a recipient of divine power and wisdom, and is converted into a "sacred" person—that is a "taboo" person. My intention in this article and in what follows is to demonstrate how very primitive is this belief and practice, and that not as a figure of speech, but as an actual fact. It goes directly back to the most primitive forms of "savage" life, and also if we can get rid of the fact that we live with the participants of that ceremony and exercise a small amount of imagination, we can easily fancy that we are looking on at the election of a chief of an uncivilized negro tribe who is being made chief solely because he is the visible incarnation of the tribal god. So far as our ceremony was accepted at its face value, they who did so, whether King or commoner, whether educated or uneducated, illustrated a case of social atavism. If they had, instead of putting on the fantastic clothing, which seen in the streets would have caused roars of laughter, if they had thrown off all clothing except a loin-cloth, and if the King had, instead of promising the things he did such as acting justly, guarding the rights and privileges of the Church, etc., had been made to promise that he would send rain regularly and cause the crops to grow and if the Archbishop had been daubed with paint and decked with feathers, all would only have been dressing for the part. Nothing can relieve the Coronation of its primitive magical nature, so far as the scientific mind is concerned, however "impressive" it may be to the primitive intelligence that was ready to shed tears over its "solemnity." Those, the majority probably, who went to see and enjoy a pageant, and who would have been as de-

lighted had the same pageant been for any kind of object whatever, need not now be considered.

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God-Boxes.

In giving the evidence for what has been said, it will save repeated references if I advise all who wish to follow the subject further than these articles to study the following works. These are Sir James Frazer's **Lectures on the History of the Kingship** (1905), **Kingship**, by A.M. Hocart (1927), **Councillors and Kings**, by the same author (1936), **The Magic Art**, by Frazer (1911), and **Christian Myth and Ritual**, by Professor E. O. James (1933). If these books do not lead to further study, there are a large number of works dealing more or less elaborately with the subject) then that person had better confine himself to a study of those weekly journals that manage to give a lot of information without saying anything worth bothering about.

The natives of Mangia (South Pacific) have a name for these god-possessed chiefs or kings. They call them "God-boxes," a term which shows the direct logical nature of the primitive mind. Our Archbishop would use the much more tortuous phrase, filled with the power of the Holy Ghost." It means no more than does the native god-box, but it is valuable because obscure. It must have come as a revelation to many when Sir James Frazer, dismissing as an idle speculation the popular belief that the primitive chief owed his position to being the strongest and bravest man of the tribe, made it quite plain that the divinity of the chief, headman, or king (the wording matters little) was a common feature of all primitive communities. In passing we may note this as another tribute to the prescience of Herbert Spencer who, in his **Principles of Sociology**, opened a new chapter in scientific sociology by emphasizing the formative influence of ideas in primitive life.

We are not now concerned with the origin of the belief in the supernatural;

the main consideration is that all over the world among primitive communities, the chief or king begins as an incarnation of the tribal god, and also it is due to the deep-seated nature of this belief that the office of a king is surrounded to-day in this country with a reproduction of the primitive mummary such as the world has just witnessed. The magical nature of kingship, its "sacred" and "sanctified" character, is very obvious when we are dealing with existing primitive communities that have no object in "rationalizing" their beliefs and customs, but the relation of the Coronation of an English King to the Fijian and other primitive ceremonies of anointing the chief is quite clear to the scientific student.

* * *

How Kings Began.

I can now give but a few specimens of the truth of what has been said, and will commence with the more primitive peoples. The natives of Futuna (South Pacific) believe that their god resides in the person of their king. From this they draw the conclusion that the king, being god, can do no wrong. This has to us a quite "constitutional" ring when we remember that it is part of our own custom. In Tanatoa after the king has been duly anointed he is worshipped, consulted as an oracle, and prayers are offered to him. This is a very common practice throughout the islands. At this "sanctification" the king is given a "sacred" girdle by the priest, which at once elevates the king to a god. We again come close to this in our own service when, after the Archbishop clothes the king, all the nobles promise him worship. The Archbishop promises him service in return for the king promising to secure the rights and privileges of the Church. It is a case of a Roland for an Oliver. Among the Igbos of Nigeria, when a king is installed, all the prayer sticks are given over to him, the officials surrender their wands of office and stand bare-headed before him. After the king has been "sanctified" the wands of office are returned, their

power having been renewed by the god, the prayer-sticks are given back and the sub-chiefs put on their head-covering and cry out a salute to the King—now a god. I need not emphasize the closeness with which this follows the Westminster ceremony. It is a recognition that everything comes from the god-king. An Igbo who had come direct from Nigeria would have followed with the fullest appreciation the Coronation of George VI. He would have witnessed the same thing in his native haunts. The ancient Sumerian Kings were born of gods. In the period of Greek life represented by the Homeric poems the kings were clearly divine. The early Babylonian Kings were treated as gods. In official theory the Mikado of Japan is still a descendent of the gods, although educated Japanese will "rationalize" the divinity of the monarch much as our king-worshippers act with regard to the semi-divinity of George VI. In each case the theoretically divine king has become a "symbol," but of what he is a symbol God only knows. But in these cases any formula serves to hide even from believers what are the actual facts. The chief Lama of Tibet is also a "god-box," the god passing from one Lama to another. This last feature is common, but not universal, with primitive peoples, and we get here the real significance of our own formula, "The King is dead, long live the King." The man is unmistakably dead, the god simply passes into the body of the new monarch. All this would be quite clear, to our Fijian visitor if he was reading the Coronation Service in his native tongue. In the Colonial Office at Pekin, there is a list of 160 incarnates who have been during past centuries licensed by the State. (Frazer, *Lectures*, p. 160). Our own list of "sanctified" kings look very juvenile by the side of that of the Chinese.

Among the negroes of the Upper Nile the chief is both medicine-man and king. The kings of Egypt were always gods, says Foucart, and in Egypt, "we find our-

selves in the presence of a conception of monarchy based solely upon the assimilation of the king to the gods"; and another authority, Moret, says "the Kings of Egypt exhausted all the possible conceptions of divinity." At Thebes a woman slept in the temple with the god-king, and the child born of the two was worshipped as an incarnate, just as centuries later there appeared in the New Testament the same story of the birth of a child from the union of a god and a woman. Robertson Smith, in his epoch-marking **Religion of the Semites** (1889) points out that the identification of the god with the king was general. Had Robertson Smith written at a later date he would most probably have stated the facts in terms much closer to later research. But he does give a list of Semitic communities, each with its own god-king. Of the Melanesians, Codrington, the chief authority on these peoples, says that the whole power of the chiefs rests "upon the belief in their supernatural power derived from spirits or ghosts with whom they had intercourse." And in the Bible the first king is anointed by the priests, and the king rules over "my people" in the name of the god. Here, again, in that expression we have the belief that everything comes from the gods, and to the people through the god-king. We have an echo of this in the king's expression, "my army", "my navy," the "King's courts of law," etc. These are taken as a mere figure to-day, but to the scientific investigator they are as illuminating in their reference as are rudimentary animal structures to the scientific biologist. And like these rudimentary bodily structures, our social ones may represent an element of danger and demoralization in their diminished and often perverted functioning.

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The "Savage" To-day

Dig where we will into the history of humanity we get the same evidence. The King does not begin as the best or bravest or wisest man of the tribe, and in this feature the kingship everywhere has

remained absolutely faithful to its origin. The King develops from the medicine-man, and becomes, in due course, the incarnation of tribal supernaturalism. From neolithic man worshipping his chief because of his supposed power with the tribal gods, or because he is both god and man at the same time, down to the Archbishop of Canterbury pouring "holy oil" over the King, and by means of his incantations, giving the King a power and wisdom and fear that he had not previously possessed, the chain of evidence is unbroken. There is absolutely no difference between the Melanesian chief sitting in the centre of a circle of his sub-chiefs while the chief priest transforms him into a god-king, and the crowd of English peers standing round the King while the Archbishop goes through substantially the same performance, and for avowedly the same purpose as was there in the most primitive, and is present to-day with the least civilised of existing peoples. There is no difference but one, and that is the feeling of pity that humanity has developed so slowly, and of contempt that so many who know better can be induced to play a part in so stupid a ceremony.

But, as I have said, the distinction between the original service with primitive humanity and that of to-day is that the "savage" of ten thousand or more years ago acted according to his lights. The modern "savage" is acting against what is known to all who take the trouble to learn. The one is a deed done in the dark; the other is an offensive against the light. We have now to inquire why the early savage acted as he did, and to consider the reactions on civilized life of this perpetuated savagery.

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The Divinity of The King.

Last week I dealt with the derivation of the kingship from the deification of the chief or headman of the tribe. This fact of the King being an incarnation of a god has always been present in coronation ser-

vices right up to our own day, but the magical nature of the Coronation has never been put before the public of this country quite so brazenly and so impudently as was done in the case of the Coronation of May 12. Encouraged by the effects of the fifty years of intensive advertising of the monarchy, and anxious to divert attention from the circumstances of the Abdication of Edward VIII., trusting also to the narcotising influence of the gigantic show, advantage was taken of the "feast of unreason" to emphasize the miraculous nature of the Coronation of George VI. I have already given many instances of this, and will now add two more. The first is from the New Year's message of Archbishop Lang:—

The Coronation is first of all an act of faith and worship, in which the Empire, with the King, dedicates itself to the service of God.

The Coronation as I have shown, is more than that, it is the actual endowment of the King with "divine" power and qualities. The *Times* puts it more definitely and comes nearer the truth:—

The Coronation, as I have shown, is strength from a power outside human life, yet draws it not for himself. Because he is in communion with forces greater than man, his life is the life of the people.

That is much nearer the truth. And the reason why is well-known to students of anthropology, and to many others who would not find it profitable to tell the whole truth.

* * *

Man and Nature

Why is it that a King is regarded as embodying the life of the community to such an extent that health, the sufficiency of rain, the fructification of the earth, in a word all that makes for the well-being of the tribes, depends upon him? Without understanding this aspect of the subject and without appreciating the extent to which the persistence of primitive feelings and primitive frames of mind influences

contemporary life, one can never understand the case with which the persistent miseducation of the people has resulted in developing the existing phase of King-worship. The "practical-minded" man is in the habit of saying "I have no time to bother about the past. I must attend to the practical things of the present." The poor shortsighted fool! The present is the past, as surely as this year's crop of wheat is past conditions presenting themselves in a concrete form. The pity of it is when by our stupidity we make the past extend unbroken and unimproved into the future.

To comprehend, if not completely to understand, the position, we must get back to Fazer's separation of magic from religion, and we may also graft on to this the theory of "mana," which would serve as a starting point for both. It may, I think, be possible to construct a line of development that will fit the facts, and also an outline of the development that led to the chief, headman, or King being believed to be an incarnation of a god. And on behalf of this sketch it may be said that while there are a multitude of known facts in its favour, there is none that I am aware of that is decisively against it.

First we have to picture man as having just reached that stage of self-consciousness at which he tries to create a mental picture of what is happening around him. In common with the animal world he knows that things happen. He puts his first questioning of nature in the wrong way—Why? It is science that asks "How?" and is content with answering that question. Pre-science, and the vast mass of the primitively-minded that are found to-day in the highest and the lowest walks of life, in the university and the church, as well as among the "lower classes," ask why things happen. "Mana" appears to be the first form of the answer. Some mysterious quasi-personal power seems to be responsible for everything that happens. The "Mana" in the stabbing stick is responsible for the injury

it does. The "Mana" in the ground grows the food, the "Mana" of an enemy is responsible for the death of a man. So it goes on. "Mana" is the universal answer that man gives to the questions he is asking. There is no doubt at all as to the universality of this belief.

* * *

The God-King

A greater definiteness of thought is achieved when this nebulous "Mana" is personified (in existing tribes of primitives, the two conceptions exist side by side). What may be called the infantile stage of the gods sets in, and it is here that Frazer believes we have the beginning of magic, as distinct from religion. Man believes that nature can be coerced, and attempts a clumsy, but wrong, method of establishing control over the forces that determine his destiny. This power of coercion is not resident in all, but in only a few favoured individuals, who, by means of formulae and incantations, such as we find among ourselves in the use of mascots, or lucky objects, in the belief that good luck may be enjoyed, or bad luck averted, give rise to the magician. It is the knowing, the wise ones of the tribes, who then take the lead, and they become chiefs or kings in virtue of their superior knowledge of the means whereby the forces of nature may be brought to act favourably towards man. Later, when man is forced to realize that the magic of the King is not reliable in coercing nature, its failure leads to religion. Then prayer takes the place of magic. Man does not order, he pleads. He does not stand erect and command, he crawls. It is the discovery of human weakness, the failure of coercive effort, the supplication of despair in the form of prayer that lie at the root of developed religion.

I am compressing into a few words the outline of a very long process, the evidence for which would fill, and has filled, volumes. But, still following Frazer, while the period of magic lasts, it

is likened to a primitive science (not a very good analogy) inasmuch as man is then trying to do what science does to-day—that is, make natural forces do his bidding. The control of nature, however, as we know, is ultimately dependent on knowledge, and that was not available. To cite Frazer:—

As time goes on, the fallacy of magic becomes more and more apparent to the acuter minds, and is slowly replaced by religion; in other words the magician gives away to the priest, who renouncing the attempt to control directly the processes of nature for the good of man, seeks to attain the same end indirectly by appealing to the gods to do for him what he no longer fancies he can do for himself. . . The King, starting as a magician, tends gradually to exchange the practice of magic for the priestly functions of prayer and sacrifice. And while the distinction between the human and the divine is still imperfectly drawn, it is often imagined that men may themselves attain to god-head, not merely after death, but in their lifetime, through the temporary or permanent possession of their whole nature by a great and powerful spirit. *No class of the community has benefited so much as kings by this belief in the possible incarnation of a god in human form. (Italics mine)*

There is actually no better established fact in anthropology than the fact that the King commences as an incarnation of a god, and is such because of the control he exercises over those things that are considered necessary to the well-being of the tribe: I can again give but a few examples, but they are really a few out of thousands that might be drawn from all parts of the world, and from all stages of human culture, from the most primitive tribe right up to the Coronation of George VI.

* * *

The King and The People.

One of the chief functions of the King was to see that rain fell in adequate quantities, and that the earth produced its proper crops. Among the Wagogo of East Africa, the main power of the chiefs depends upon his rain-making. The chief of the Masai is expected to make rain and to destroy the tribe's enemies. Among the Negroes of the Upper Nile, it is the chief who brings rain, scatters enemies, and is responsible, as is our own King in the national anthem, for making his people "happy and glorious." In 1880 the followers of Lo Bengula had no doubt that when he arrived at his Kraal the needed rain would come, much as many in this country attributed to divine providence the fine weather that accompanied the Jubilee of George V. The ancient Mexican Kings took an oath at their accession that they would make the sun shine, the rain to fall, and the earth to be fruitful. The ancient Egyptian Kings went farther than any in this direction. Not only the weather and the crops, and victory in battle depended upon the King, but also the very life of the gods. In celebrating divine worship the King said, "O gods you are safe if I am safe. Your doubles are safe if my double is safe at the head of all living doubles. *All live, if I live.*" If one can imagine one of our Kings with enough philosophy and knowledge and wit to repeat this prayer, we could well take it as a very fine piece of satire. Kingship and religion are indissolubly connected. James the First said the same thing in his "No bishop, no king."

The ancient Burgundian Kings also possessed the power of securing good crops, and might be deprived of their position if they failed to do so. That, again, expresses a very common phenomenon. A King who fails to carry out his part of the contract, is often removed or ceremonially killed. So important is this function of controlling the rain and the weather and of giving victory, that in many instances a King may be sacri-

ficed for no other reason than that he is getting old. That is because as he grows weaker so may the power of the sun, or the quality of the rain, or the certainty of victory be less. Among the Red Indian tribes the rain-making function of the chief is well-established. Among the Swedes good or bad crops were *always* attributed to the Kings. A cannon of St. Patrick attributes to Kings, "fine weather, calm seas, crops abundant, and trees laden with fruits." The cure of disease by the divine touch of the King is also very common, and one need only remind readers that as late as Queen Anne's reign, the monarch, after being consecrated, had the power of curing certain disease by a touch. And at the Jubilee of George V. it was solemnly suggested by some newspaper correspondents that this practice might be revived, with profit to sufferers. It may be taken that if the ceremony had been revived, which after all is no more remarkable than the curings of disease by the "laying on of hands," there would have been thousands of cures recorded. A people who can treasure the memory of the touch of a King, or a glance from a Queen is not really so very far removed from the state of mind indicated by the practice above noted.

* * *

An Ancient Ceremony.

No reasonable person can doubt that the Coronation Service, in even its present emasculated form, is no more than another version of the ceremonial induction of the chiefs of uncivilized peoples all over the world. It must be noted that it is through the magic of the Archbishop that the King is endowed with the power to "give his people guidance," to gain victory, to secure plenty, and so forth. It is not said of, and it is not claimed for, the **man** who was King by Act of Parliament. It would have been glaringly absurd to have spoken of the people receiving the benefits named through the man-King but when we are dealing with the god-King we are

on a different level. As the "Times" says, he draws his power from outside human life. Ridiculous in itself, once the magic of the holy oil is applied, and the performance staged with the technique of Hollywood show and a verbose religious ceremony, the absurd becomes "impressive." It is the "sanctified" monarch that does the trick.

Next week I will deal with the social consequences of this perpetuation of uncivilized ideas in our own time. But I think I have said enough to justify my repeated statement that the Coronation Service comes to us direct from the jungle, and that it embodies one of the earliest superstitions of mankind. Between the ceremony in Westminster Abbey and the induction of a chief among the Zulus, the Masai, the Igbos, the negroes of the Nile, the Fijians, the denizens of Malaya, the ancient Mexicans, the Egyptian Kings, there is not the slightest substantial difference. The medicine-man grins through the mask of the Archbishop, the tom-tom beats through the peal of the organ, the smell of the forest comes through the perfume of incense, the impressive solemnity of the peers of the Britain masks the awe of the savage watching his chief receive the spirit of the tribal joss. It is all there, and the fact that so many of the onlookers and participants at Westminster no longer accept the performance in its real and legitimate sense makes the whole proceeding the more intellectually and socially demoralizing.

A Threat To Civilization

In the course of a lecture on "The Scope of Social Anthropology," delivered in 1908, Sir James Frazer said:—

Systematic enquiries... have revealed the astonishing, nay, the alarming truth, that a mass, if not the majority of every civilized society is still living in a state of intellectual savagery, that, in fact, the smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined with superstition. Only those whose studies have led them to

investigate the subject are aware of the depth to which the ground beneath our feet is thus honeycombed by unseen forces. We appear to be standing on a volcano which may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation.

I think this may well be taken as a text for the conclusion of my notes on the uprising of savagery that we have been witnessing in this country in connexion with the mumbo-jumboism of the Coronation. The Coronation is, of course, only one instance of many that is indicative of the threat to civilization to which Sir James Frazer refers. We have the same thing on a large scale in the throwback to the primitive in the development of a pre-scientific racialism and a narrow form of tribalism in Germany and Italy. We are not without this form of reversion in this country, and we have also the prevalence of stupid superstitions, from reading the future in tea-leaves, to the carrying of mascots in the shape of a lucky stone or doll on a motor-car, the wearing of a talismanic cross, and a hundred other stupidities that are called religious when established, and superstitious when they are not Hobbes' famous definition of superstition and religion still holds the field. And once more I must guard myself by saying that the undeveloped mentality indicated by these practices has no class boundary or significance. The practices flourish with the Court as they do with the most ignorant villager in a remote part of the country. They are as rife in the university as in the gutter. It is the knowledge that goes with understanding that matters.. Knowledge without understanding is very common, and there is no fool quite so hopeless of improvement as the fool with knowledge, but who lacks any great degree of understanding.

If I remain alive, and active for another two years, I shall then have completed fifty years of continuous Free-thought platform work. I believe this will constitute a record in the history of

our movement. And during all these years I have been vividly conscious of the savage in our midst, and of the threat he offers to whatever genuine civilization we have acquired. That is why I have dwelt so strongly upon the intrinsic nature of our very much advertised Coronation Service. We simply cannot have a secure civilization with a population, a very large part of which so easily gives way to the play of primitive impulses and the sway of primitive beliefs. The king-worship that has been so sedulously cultivated for the past half-century, the impudent advertising of the nature of the Westminster miracle-play, these, with numerous other happenings, are not merely illustrative proof of the soundness of Frazer's warning, they are also evidence of the readiness of large numbers of men and women to exploit this latent barbarism for purely selfish ends. This barbarism does stand, if I may use a term which in the mouths of most implies either folly or knavery, as a symbol. It is a symbol of the primitive in man, and a warning that beneath a thin veneer of culture there is the savage naked and unashamed.

A Substitute For Monarchy

In the preceding articles I have tried to keep distinct the question of an hereditary Monarchy from that of Monarchy in general. The latter is a question mainly of terminology, and if it is to be rejected it is only because it carries that reference to the savage which it is advisable to eliminate as far as possible. But an hereditary monarchy is an insult to human intelligence. To have at the head of the State one whose sole valid claim is that he has achieved the feat of being the son of his father, and who, whether he be genius or next door to an idiot, is still King, is of all institutions the most ridiculous. As Paine pointed out, there is as great a warranty for the present generation selling future generations into slavery, as there is for a past generation to determine who shall be the head of the

State when they are dead and probably forgotten.

In that storehouse of wise sociological teachings, *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* (The story turns upon a Yankee who is transported back into the court of King Arthur, and describes the way in which he sets to work to civilize the people of Arthur's day), one of the characters argues in favour of a Republic with an hereditary monarch.

He believed that no nation that had ever known the joy of worshipping a Royal Family could ever be robbed of it and not die of melancholy. I urged that Kings were very dangerous. He then said: Then have cats. He was sure that a royal family of cats would serve every purpose. They would be as useful as any other royal family, they would know as much, they would have the same virtues and the same treacheries, the same disposition to get up shindies with other royal cats, they would be laughingly vain and absurd and never know it, they would be wholly inexpensive; and, finally, they would have as sound a claim to a divine right as any other royal house, and Tom XI. or Tom XIV. by the grace of God would sound as well as when applied to the ordinary Tom-cat with tights on. The worship of royalty being founded in unreason, these graceful and harmless cats would become as sacred as any royalties, and indeed more so because it would presently be noticed that they hanged nobody, beheaded nobody, imprisoned nobody, inflicted no cruelties and injustices of any sort, and so must be worthy of a deeper love and reverence than the customary human king, and would certainly get it.

After all, cats were worshipped in ancient Egypt, and for the same reason that the King was offered "worship" in Westminster in 1937. One need only remember that royal virtues go with the office to realize that this suggestion of the page-boy in Twain's novel deserves some consideration.

For the main suggestion here offered, I think I might quote Mr. Winston Churchill in support. In the course of the discussion on the Civil List Bill he defended the Coronation display on the grounds that the people loved to see the throne surrounded with pomp and ceremony, and they enjoyed a pageant. I think this is quite true of large masses of the population, and it holds out a very easy way of governing, and gulling, them. "Bread and the Circus" as a maxim of government is at least as old as the Roman Empire. And every film-star manager knows that "We must have publicity." And if we must have a monarchy because the people love pomp and ceremony and pageantry, then it seems that the suggestion of the "Yankee" really does deserve consideration. In that case, as a mere "symbol" there seems no reason why a race of royal cats might not do. Dean Swift, had he been alive, might have suggested an animal of a larger size and with longer ears, but that is a matter of detail. I take it that Mr. Churchill did not realize how near he was getting to Mark Twain.

* * *

Save Us From Our Friends

The extent to which the development of king-worship has gone has been illustrated in previous articles. I need only recall the stupid outburst in the "*Times*" to the effect that the King embodied the life of the people, and that he was moved by forces beyond ordinary human beings. This extravagant adulation of the Royal Family has gone so far that even the staid and conservative *Spectator* was forced to raise a protest. The passage I am citing was used by one of the speakers in the Civil List debate, and it was worth noting that none of the papers reported it. It does not do to give the game away too openly:—

The blurb writers represent our royalties to be partly creatures out of fairy-land, partly super-human, and partly divine. I read in a great newspaper, "the Princess Elizabeth has to

a peculiar degree the art of carrying herself with an easy charm and grace and dignity. She is steeped in economics and accomplished in Latin, French and German, while the principles and precedents of the constitution will soon be studied."

And this of a child of eleven, belonging to a family concerning which it is not claimed by even its most fervent admirers, that any of its members possess outstanding mental ability. I do not know anything about the easy charm, grace and dignity of the Princess—these qualities go with the post—but I am sure that if a child can stand the public exhibition to which this one is exposed, with men and women bowing before her in the full gaze of the public, and kept constantly on show to receive public applause, if a child can stand all this unspoiled, it must indeed be more, or less, than human. I do not think that any parent will deny the truth of this.

One almost ceases to marvel at the writer cited last week, who made the discovery that the English home was restored to us by George V. and Mr. Baldwin. Consider. There are round about ten millions of homes in these islands. In all but a very small number, the family life is clean and decent, and the members of the family behave loyally to each other. So loyally that I question whether in many of them an order, presumably from a Prime Minister and an Archbishop, that they must not attend a brother's marriage, would have received any attention. If a man walked into a newspaper office with the information that he had visited a hundred homes and found ninety per cent decent, he would be treated as a fool. No one expects otherwise. It is the blackguardly home that constitutes "news." The opposite sort is very common. It is the character of the domestic life of our monarchs, of Charles II and William III., of the four Georges and of William IV., that has led to praise of the domestic life of their successors. If taken at its face value the

praise of the family life of our recent monarchs is an announcement of a reform, not news of an example. The Archbishop of Canterbury holds that human morality depends upon a belief in God. The believers in the divinity of Kings hold that it is the example of the Royal Family, our Royal Family, that has induced the normal home to be decent. The Recall to Religion and the Deification of the King go well together.

King As Symbol.

Of old the deification of the King *expressed* the savage. To-day it *masks* him. In the one case it was an attempt of the uninstructed human intelligence to deal with the facts as they were understood. To-day it is an example of the danger to civilization that Frazer indicates. Mr. Churchill apologizes for the garishness of the Coronation by saying that the people like pomp, and it brings the throne nearer to them. Others explain that the people are naturally interested in the principal figures in the State. These are idle subterfuges. There is a President in the United States and in France. People are interested in them—as Presidents. But there is not this showman's parade of them and their families, and if neither President ever said anything or did anything out of the ordinary, if their chief function was to open institutions, to visit hospitals and talk to selected cases, to attend a dinner or a garden party or an exhibition or a theatre, and to have even the shortest of speeches written for them, one may question whether Frenchmen or Americans would regard their Presidents as extraordinary men, who demanded for their sustentation some force superior to that which bears upon ordinary individuals. Neither the President of France nor of America ever talks of "my Army" or "my Navy," nor is there in either country the legal fiction that the land of the country belongs to the President, and that law and justice come from him. These are all heritages from the age of the god-king. There is no talk in either America or

France of Presidential blood; nor is there when the President is enthroned a sanctification service that endows him with some quality of the divine.

It is said that the King stands to his people as a "symbol"—a word which, suggestively enough, is used to rehabilitate the decaying belief in a god. But why a symbol? Are we to believe that the Englishman does not love his country or respect his institutions enough to save them for their own sake? Are we to believe that although the Frenchman or the American can act upon an intelligent appreciation of national institutions, the Briton can only do this when they are embodied in a man or a woman? If so, this is a very curious way of praising the inhabitants of the British Empire. But if the people are to take an absurdity seriously, it must be stated very solemnly.

Of what is the King a symbol? Of the permanency of our institutions? That is impossible. The duration of our institutions is a matter for the people and Parliament. The King has nothing to do with that. Is he the symbol of our liberties? Again, impossible. Recent events have shown that the King must do as he is ordered by his ministers; and it is a common lesson of history that everywhere the liberties of the people have been wrung from the throne. There is no instance in history where the reverse is the case. Mr. Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons, said that the King was our greatest protection against dictatorships. Nonsense! It is actually the countries where the Kings really took part in the control of the country that have gone over to the worst forms of dictatorship. It is in the two countries in which Kings do not exist, and the one in which their power is most severely curtailed that democracy has come best through the post-war years.

It is said the King is a symbol of unity. A unity of what? Of religion? The King is so little a symbol of unity here, that not

his religion selected for him, but to change it means that he would cease to be King, and while he is by law an Episcopalian in England, whenever he enters Scotland he again is by law, a Presbyterian. And taking the British Empire as a whole, the King's dictated religion represents the belief of only a very small minority of the people of the Empire. Mr. Churchill's philosophy—and it is not peculiar to him, appears to be that the only way to rule the people is to fool them.

The King is a symbol! That is an insult to the King disguised as a compliment. For a symbol is a sign that stands for something not itself. A flag may be a symbol of a country, but the piece of bunting is nothing. Mathematicians deal with symbols, but the signs they use are in themselves mere scratches on a piece of paper. One of the symbols of some American colleges is a howl that reminds one of feeding time at the Zoo. When these people defend the hereditary monarchy on the ground that it is a symbol, they are really saying that the King in himself is nothing; anyone or anything will do once we have got accustomed to it. They tell us we are not asked to pay respect to the man or woman on the throne. They are nothing. They are mere symbols. If that is not insulting the occupant of the throne, what is it? And if it is not Twain's philosophy of hereditary cats, what is it?

Again, I must guard myself against misunderstanding. I am not arguing that the appointed head of the State shall not be called King, although that term carries certain bad implications. I am only trying to guard against the repetition of an orgy of barbarism such as the country has recently witnessed, and the "tongue-in-the-cheek" philosophy that has been served up by such men as Mr. Churchill. The Archbishop's "Recall to Religion" has been used to cover the forced abdication of Edward VIII. The lavish Coronation-cum-Hollywood show had the magical nature of the Coronation emphasized as

part payment to the Archbishop. A man with so much cunning in his eyes is not likely to do what he did without securing a *quid pro quo*. Church and Throne have worked all together. They were together in origin. They will be together at the end. A King minus the religious nimbus round his head becomes an officer of the State, to be judged as other State functionaries are judged. He is not a symbol. He is something.

One cannot say when the semi-magical King and the overpaid fantastically-dressed medicine-man will disappear from civilized society. Thousands of generations ago the wild dog contracted the habit of trampling down the grass before taking its rest. It served to warn the dog against any noxious thing that might lie hidden in the grass. Today the domesticated descendant of that wild dog goes through the same performance before settling down on the dining-room hearthrug. Thousands of generations ago the King came into being as an incarnation of nature spirits—a God. Then the god-king caused the sun to shine, the rain to fall, the crops to grow, and held at bay, disease. He was, as the Archbishop of York said of George VI, an incarnation of the life and health of the community. The generations pass. Conditions change, but the frame of mind that was common to our openly savage ancestors persists. We still pray for Victory through the King. We still sanctify and anoint him to mark him off from common human nature. The ceremonial approach to the god-king, necessary to protect the subject against the powerful "mana" of the King, is still with us in our court ceremonies. The touch of a King is still treasured as bringing us momentarily within the sacred circle. Times have changed, knowledge has widened and deepened, but old habits remain with man as with the domesticated dog. Like the dog in the dining-room trampling down non-existent grass, protecting himself against dangerous things that are not there, man still secretes in his brain-cells the potentiality of the superstitions

that hung as a constant terror over the life of our earliest ancestors.

If the existence of the savage meant no more than fondness for display, a childish love of decorations or of a uniform, the whole might be passed with a smile. The more dangerous aspect is that a calculated use of these primitive impulses by those who are skilful enough to utilise them to advance their own ends is a constant threat to all that makes for the real dignity of manhood and the sure progress of the race. Germany offers us to-day the extreme example of how a people can be induced to turn their backs upon art and literature, and even to value science only to the extent to which it can minister to the most brutal passions and to the most primitive ideas. The hope of the world lies not so much in the extermination of the primitive in man, as in its "sublimation," in enlarging the mental outlook and in broadening the human sympathies and in establishing a real conviction of the fundamental equality of human nature. There can be no such conviction while we encourage, some of us in ignorance, others of set purpose, the primitive superstition that lies so deeply embedded in king-worship.

It is with this deeper end in view that I have dwelt so lengthily on the real significance of the brazenly published magical nature of the Coronation Service, and the impudent advertising of the Royal Family as the source of family purity and national greatness. We have come a long way from palaeolithic man; but we have not travelled so far that we may not find ourselves back to him, led there in the wake of a cheap and tawdry popular pageant, with the present-day medicine-men as masters of the ceremonies, and by the aid of a prostituted science and a debased culture.

The old Roman Civilization fell before the inrush of hordes of barbarians and barbarian culture, which achieved its end in the name of a "Recall to Religion." To-day we have no such outside horde of barbarians to fear. The barbarians of to-day are within the gates. It is they we have to fear. In the words of Frazer, already cited, our culture is "sapped and mined with superstition" that "may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation."

(End)

Let us conquer the world, not by force
of arms but with ideas that liberate
Zola

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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CONGRESS AND EDUCATION

BY

R. D. KARVE, (Bom.) Diplome d'Etudes Superieures (Paris)

Every sensible adult who is not a member of the Congress Party must be thanking his stars that he is not of school-going age.

I am personally also thankful that I am no longer a Government servant, who may perhaps be compelled to wear the khadi manufactured by the victims of the Wardha scheme of education and I hope even the Congress Government is not quite so mad as to compel even innocent citizens to devote some of their income to buying khadi.

(Reproduced from the "SENTINEL")

Not that I am against Khadi altogether, I know that it makes excellent dusters, but as for wearing it, one must be as mad as Dr. M. K. Gandhi has confessed himself to be after khadi even to think of it, unless of course one is a member of the Congress Party, in which case one would owe allegiance to the Congress Dictator. Considered on its merits, khadi is a fad of Dr. Gandhi's and will die a natural, if not a violent, death after him. It has no merit so far as wear is concerned.

Any sensible person will admit that

the most suitable cloth for India is the thinnest of light-coloured cloths, and these are much more easily and cheaply manufactured by machine than by hand. It seems necessary to remind people that even hand-spinning and weaving requires machines and I do not see on what principle crude hand-machines are to be preferred to mill machinery. If the rate of production is any objection, then on the same principle, an expert spinner must be compelled not to exceed a certain speed, as that would be unfair competition with less skilled spinners,

I was obliged to say all this about khadi, as the Wardha scheme seems to be based on khadi. That is not, however, the only objection, nor even the most important objection to that scheme.

I am not impressed by the enumeration of the qualifications of the Committee. Only two of them seem to have real educational degrees, and of course those who have none are asserted to be profoundly learned, as anybody selected by the Congress must naturally be.

Dr. Gandhi's paper 'Harijan' makes a merit of the fact that Prof. K. T. Shah was included in the Committee "with the knowledge that his was the only dissentient voice in the whole Conference". But after taking due credit for this fact, Dr. Gandhi coolly suppresses the dissenting minute of Prof. Shah and publishes the majority report only.

Apparently Prof. Shah must have promised Dr. Gandhi not to publish it without his consent, otherwise it is difficult to see why it has not been published elsewhere. This is Truth as observed by the Congress.

* * *

But the suppression of Prof. Shah's opinion can hardly prevent, and has not prevented, other people from seeing the glaring defects of the preposterous scheme put forward by the Committee of so-called educational experts, and there is no reason why they should suppress their opinions.

There never has been any doubt that the present system of education requires a thorough overhauling, but the abuse that Dr. Gandhi showers on it is hardly deserved.

It has to be remembered that it has produced many eminent men and women who have been imbued with the national spirit, and though they may have differed from Dr. Gandhi on details, they did see the needs of the country and even sacrificed themselves for the country. The Congress has not the monopoly of such people and even the present Congress consists of people educated under the old system. Still, the necessity of reform

being admitted, let us see what the new scheme comes to.

* * *

The vague generalities and the praise of Dr. Gandhi's leadership are naturally to be expected from a Committee appointed by the Congress, so it is no use criticising it.

The statements made under "Craft work in schools" are more questionable. Nobody disputes the usefulness of handicrafts as providing an occupation if necessary on going out of school, but when it is claimed that an "integral" all-sided education can be given through such crafts, one is far from convinced. It is of course possible to make the teaching of any given subject so broad as to include many other subjects, and a fragmentary knowledge of such subjects may be arrived at in this manner. But such knowledge can hardly be considered an "integral all-sided education".

Psychologists are not at all inclined to admit the general value of education in any particular subject. The general platitudes about the inculcation of the ideal of citizenship sound all right, but this depends mainly on the teacher and good teachers have done this before now under any scheme however bad.

* * *

Coming to details, the insistence on a "minimum knowledge of carding and spinning with the takli" is merely a concession to Dr. Gandhi's mania and is absolutely without any intrinsic merit. There is no reason why pupils who choose an industry other than spinning and weaving should bear the further burden of compulsory spinning and weaving.

I think the load to be imposed on the pupil is a much more important point than Dr. Gandhi's fads, but it is impossible to expect any Committee under his dictatorship to think so. The burden on the pupil is already so great under the new scheme that it is worth while to spare him the smallest additional strain.

* * *

A highly objectionable item mentioned under "Social Studies" is "to de-

velop mutual respect for the world religions". This is the result of Dr. Gandhi himself being highly superstitious (or religious, if he prefers it, but it comes to the same thing). It is perfectly ridiculous to try to educate people into respecting superstitions. It is not the same thing as to teach toleration. Toleration merely means readiness to acknowledge that everybody has a right to express his views, however stupid or different from yours they may be, and to behave accordingly, i.e., to say, not to try to suppress him by law, nor to take advantage of any existing law to sue him for hurting your religious feelings.

The "world religions" contain a great many stupid ideas and practices and no sensible person can be expected to respect these. How to behave towards a person who believes in different superstitions is merely a question of manners, which may prevent your telling him the truth to his face in adequately strong words. But this is merely social behaviour and it does not include respect for other peoples' religions as such. Considering the enormous amount of harm done by religions, which is obvious to any student of history, it will make any sensible person detest religions, not respect them.

To achieve the object of making people respect religions, it is proposed to give them "a course in history, in geography, in civics and in current events, combined with a reverential study of the different religions of the world, showing how in essentials they meet in perfect harmony".

History and geography, honestly taught, will never give anybody a respect for religions, so the Committee wants to combine with them a 'reverential study' of different religions. This is dishonest education, because nobody will object to a comparative study of religions if pupils are allowed freedom of comment, but a "reverential study" implies suppression of all comment, which is certainly not entitled to be called education.

Dr. Gandhi is certainly following the

Jesuit policy of catching them young, and the inclusion of this item only goes to prove that the Committee has not understood that the development of the reasoning faculty is an essential part of education and this cannot be done by preaching reverence. Here again is a sample of Truth as practised by the Congress.

The preaching of non-violence is certainly desirable from the ethical point of view, but it can hardly be given a historical background, as has been suggested, since history abounds in instances where violence has triumphed. Is history to be cooked to suit Dr. Gandhi's doctrines?

* * *

Dr. Gandhi's fads are apparently to be considered synonymous with the good, the true and the beautiful. Item 'h' under Hygiene, for instance, says: "Purity of conduct as a preservative of health". This is sheer humbug if words are to be taken in their usual sense. Water which looks beautifully clean may be full of germs and no purity will save you from disease if you drink it. But considering Dr. Gandhi's obsession with sex, I suppose "purity" is used in the technical sense of refraining from sex intercourse unless sanction has been obtained from the priest or the registrar of marriages.

To connect this with health is certainly not teaching scientific Hygiene, which says that contagious disease is not produced without the presence of germs and entirely ignores the existence of priests and registrars. This is not education in any sense. Gandhi's doctrines may possibly be approved by some people as morality, but they have nothing to do with hygiene.

* * *

The time-table suggested appears to me to be perfectly absurd. The pupil is supposed to be at school for 5 hours and a half every day during 288 days in the year, with a recess of 10 minutes. To make a boy or girl of 7, or even of 14 (the schooling is to be from 7 to 14, with the option to parents to withdraw girls at

12 years), work for five and a half hours, even including an interval of 10 minutes, is a monstrosity.

The ten minutes allowed will hardly suffice for taking much needed nourishment, and the physical training for 10 minutes a day can certainly not replace the free movement required by children of that age, which can only be provided by games or unhampered running and romping.

All pupils are assumed to be so terribly dull as to require 3 hours 20 minutes per day to be devoted to the basic craft for seven years! And still the Committee says that the basic craft is not supposed to be mainly for production on an industrial scale. I do not believe Indian children are in general so hopelessly stupid as to take that time to learn any craft whatsoever.

Music, drawing and arithmetic are all included in 40 minutes per day. Social studies and general science are given 30 minutes a day, and the last must obviously include Nature Study, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Hygiene and Chemistry! Even if the rudiments of these subjects are to be really taught, and this is not to be a mere pretence of teaching science, this distribution of time must seem strange to anybody who has any experience of teaching! The time allotted to Dr. Gandhi's fad is out of all proportion to its importance as compared to other subjects.

* * *

Now for the pretence that the scheme is self-supporting. The total salary of a teacher at Rs. 25 per month for 7 years comes to Rs. 2,100, while the turn-over of 30 students whom he teaches, on an average, comes to Rs. 1,825, accepting the figures given by the Committee. This leaves a deficit of Rs. 275, or a little more than Rs. 39 per year per teacher. This assumes that, as suggested by Dr. Gandhi, the government guarantees to "take over, at prices calculated as above, the product of the work done by its future citizens in school," a view which the Committee heartily endorses, as indeed they

are bound to.

With this proviso, the claim to be self-supporting becomes very weak, Gandhi's government may accept it, but are all future governments bound to do it? And does the Committee by any chance imagine that the only expenses government has to incur for education are the teachers' salaries? Even the teachers' salaries are not covered by the work of pupils.

Many of these pupils are children of very poor parents who can hardly feed them properly and the Committee very kindly suggest that the food may be supplemented at school when funds permit. But even the home food may become poorer and more scanty when boys are kept at school for 5½ hours and are not able to contribute to the family income.

Indeed the Committee itself has suggested that the school should make arrangements for the boys to undertake spinning at home and should see that they get proper wages in return! So after spinning and weaving for 3 hours 20 minutes every day at school, they are to start spinning at home! So everything is to be sacrificed for spinning, spinning, spinning and weaving, weaving, weaving all the year round. Apparently, since expert spinners were on the Committee, there is no danger of over-production.

Dreams of spinning seem to have produced cobwebs in the brains of some people. Otherwise there is no way of accounting for such a preposterous scheme, which is certainly not self-supporting on its merits, (though of course a government subsidy can support anything,) which imposes an intolerable strain on growing children, which neglects important subjects for the sake of a fad and inculcates superstitions at the expense of scientific knowledge. Of course the government being the government, it can foist any scheme on the public, irrespective of its merits. But that cannot alter facts and though the Congress makes a parade of Truth, their advocacy has no magic that will turn anything they say into Truth.

THE FETISH OF LANGUAGE

BY

Dr. R. P. PARANJPYE

Every reader of Moliere's **Le Malade Imaginaire** has laughed heartily over the scene where there is presented in burlesque form the ceremony of making a full-fledged doctor. Thus, for example, one of the doctors of the faculty asks the candidate "De hiero maladus unus Tom-bavit in meas manus, Homo qualitatis comme un Cresus. . . Venillas mihi dire, Docte bachiliere, Quid illi facere." The candidate answers: "Clysterium donare, Postea seignare, Ensuita purgare." The Latin form of these doggerel verses in which almost every word is French is intensely ludicrous. Such a profound veneration for a learned and unknown language as is satirised in this extract was not confined to the times of Moliere.

The place of Latin in Europe is taken by Sanskrit in this country among the Hindus. In the well-known play in Marathi **Sharada**, when an avaricious father wanted to sell his fourteen year old daughter to an old man, he tried to persuade his wife by saying that the **Shastras** sanction such marriages in the formula "Chaturdasha Varsha Kanyam Panchatisottamo Varah", which is nothing but ordinary Marathi with the Sanskrit terminations **anuswara** and **Visarga**. The old father knew very well that a few words which are Sanskrit in appearance would take in his wife very readily.

The exaggerated respect for a foreign language is not peculiar to the uneducated. Even very cultured people attach weight to a Latin or Greek or even French or German quotation to a greater extent than they would do to a sentence carrying exactly the same meaning in English. This is not due to an implied assumption in the greater force of an opinion which holds among the people speaking other languages. It is due to the habit of paying greater respect to what is unfamiliar. The weight attached to the printed word is another case in point.

Not so many years ago, when it was said that such and such a fact had come out in print, no greater evidence was required for the truth of this fact. This was probably because printed matter was a rare commodity in those days. In these days, perhaps, the presumption would lie the other way about matter printed in some journals on some topics!

But the evil is worse still in India. Over and above the respect to a dead language which we see even in the West, we have here a case in which the dead language is also considered sacred. Instances of interpolation in recognised Sanskrit works are far too numerous in India. If you want to popularise any new fad, one very efficacious method is to twist a Sanskrit passage from a recognised work to support it. Of course, a complete work in its favour in Sanskrit supposed to date from old times would set it merrily up. Instances of some new-fangled gods, whose worship is very popular now but who were altogether unknown some forty or fifty years ago, can be given to any extent. If the present writer is correctly informed, the worship of Satyanarayan or Satyaganapati, which is very common among Bombay Deccanis, has no very great antiquity to boast of. Trifling verbal alterations in the legendary book narrating the exploits of the god, and trifling variations in the ritual, will adapt the tale and the worship to another god. Apparently some very clever Brahmin of the first half of the nineteenth century who could make Sanskrit verses composed the work, which does not show any extraordinary literary merit. With simple uneducated folk, everything in Sanskrit is holy, and that is why these comparatively common verses pass current. If the language had been a common vernacular, their literary deficiency would have been found out immediately.

We are inclined to believe that if our Shastras had not been written in a little-known language, they would not have commanded the deep veneration that they now do. Whenever any question of social reform comes to be discussed, the first impulse of everybody is to look up the authorities, as if these authorities were veritable prophets who knew everything that was to happen after their time. If however, we look closely at the matter, we shall find that the writers of the Shastras were only the children of their time—possibly slightly in advance. They cannot, and ought not to, claim to regulate the lives of generations unborn or even unthought-of in their time. The Shastras ought to carry weight only as historical documents and no more. The sooner our educated men and our reformers in particular leave off the habit of going back to the Shastras, the better it will be for the cause of reform. At present, as soon as a change is proposed, all our energy is taken up in hunting up the old texts and twisting their meaning to suit our preconceived opinions. It will be found that all our discussions of social reform degenerate rapidly into a branch of classical scholarship. Take the case of widow marriage, for instance, the anniversary of the law allowing which is celebrated in many places every year. Men of common sense would have thought that any real difference of opinion on the question as far as the marriage of child-widows is concerned can hardly be conceived as possible; so strong does the case in its favour appear to be. Not a bit of it. We are treated to a discussion of the now hackneyed Sanskrit verse: "Nashte mrite..." and an elaborate discussion of what it means. Hardly any importance is attached by some speakers to the great moral arguments for the proposed reform, to the great weight of the social injustice that is hanging round the neck of the Hindu community. Are we talking about the elevation of the Depressed classes? Straightway we are treated to a disquisition on the famous verse in the **Purusha**

Sukta where the Brahmins are stated to have been created from the mouth of the creator, etc. Here again the moral arguments is hardly appreciated to its proper extent. Is it the question of child-marriage that is under discussion? Straightway we have learned dissertations on the wellknown Sanskrit saying "Ashta Varsha Bhavet Kanya", etc. In all these cases, and many more can be easily cited, I am inclined to think that if all the so-called authorities were in a known vernacular, the difficulties in the way of the social reformers would have been perceptibly less.

The passage from a learned but unknown tongue to the common vernacular of the country has presented difficulties in all countries. The writers who first clothed their literary efforts in French or Italian about the close of the Middle Ages must have been bold men indeed to defy the accepted opinion that Latin was the only literary language. About the same time in the Maharashtra the learned

(Continued on page 28)

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THE RATIONAL OUT-LOOK ON LITERATURE

SPEECH DELIVERED BY

*Prof. J. O. Bartley M. A., (Belfast)**at the R. A. I. Reunion, on January 9, 1938.*

Rationalism is not, in the main, a matter of certain conclusions to which one comes, or certain opinions which one holds. It is rather a way of coming to conclusions and a way of holding opinions. We hold our opinions with open minds, subject to the possibility of new knowledge or new demonstration, and we come to our conclusions through a process which fundamentally asks and endeavours to answer two questions—What are the facts? What is the reasonable deduction from the facts? Rationalism is, in short, the attempt to deal with the phenomena of human life in the spirit of scientific inquiry, and to apply the results of that inquiry in the human lives we read.

All the phenomena of human life, therefore, are matters pertinent to the consideration of the rationalist; they are the facts, and as such they must be observed. But many of them are not only facts, but also influences; and as such they must be treated with suspicion, lest they should obscure the answer to either question. Especially suspicious are all emotional phenomena, since they, more than anything else, obscure the clarity of human judgment. Yet, so important and so fundamental is the part they play in human life that no one can afford to neglect them—they, more than anything else, need to be looked at rationally.

Now, a very great part of literature is intimately concerned with emotions, and concerned in two ways—as describing emotions, and as inducing them—though the two ways are often so confused as to be very difficult to distinguish. But at any rate we can draw a distinction—though by no means a completely exclusive one between literature which is informative and literature which

is emotional, in De Quincey's words, between the literature of knowledge and the literature of power: that is, between literature which conveys information and literature which induces emotion. Obviously, it is not possible to make this distinction a hard and fast one: equally obviously, the class into which any particular piece of writing falls depends largely on the person who reads it. And it is on the face of it, natural to suppose that a rationalist, as such, will tend to disapprove of a sort of literature which, by stirring his emotions, is liable to befog his judgment. But most of the literature which is on all sides admitted to be of the first rank belongs to the literature of power. Poetry is often put in opposition to science, and they are thought of as incompatibles struggling for the mastery. If this is right, there can be no doubt that the rationalist is on the side of science and the enemy of poetry, especially as the advocates of poetry very often claim for it, or at least use terms which can easily seem to claim for it, some sort of supernatural power which transcends rational judgment.

To determine what is a rational way to approach literature—and poetry in particular, since it is the most emotional form of literature in every way—there are two questions to be asked and answered.—Need poetry obscure rational judgment? and can its special qualities be explained in a rational way? These questions are not so simple and easy to answer as perhaps they appear.

It is a fact that poetry has the power to stir emotion very greatly, and it is a fact that rational judgment is liable to be exceedingly difficult when emotions are strongly excited. It is also a fact that the literature of power—especially poetry—has been recognized as a good thing by

humanity in general, and more particularly by many persons whose competence to judge is hardly open to doubt. It may be taken, I think, as a fact of experience, that poetry is valuable in human life.

There are other things to consider. Poetry is a source of delight, of an intense pleasure which may reach heights hardly to be equalled in human experience, and this often seems inexplicable,—which seems to be the reason why so often a supernatural power has been attributed to it. Why should words—mere words—affect us as strongly as they do? It is even more strange than that “sheep’s guts should hale the souls out of men’s bodies,” that black marks on white paper should do what they do. Poetry can and does induce a tranced, ecstatic state, which seems to demand a mystical explanation. We will hardly take up the Puritan opinion that pleasure needs moral justification, but nevertheless we cannot help thinking that there is more in it than that, or at least that the pleasure is of a particularly valuable kind. There is a contradiction, or at least a difficulty here.

Why do people tend to give, as they do, mystical explanations of experience? Why, for instance, did St. Teresa mysticise her erotic dreams, or Wordsworth the emotional effect of mountains? Other people have such experiences, but they do not put it down to divine intervention. If I may hazard an explanation, it is due to a sub-conscious conflict. A mystic is a person who, whether or not his mysticism approves humility, tends to be fundamentally anything but humble, for he regards himself, by virtue of his mystic experience, as specially favoured in his knowledge of and unity with truth, or God, or whatever it is. Mysticism seems to me a means by which a man can reconcile in himself things strongly opposed to one another. It is not the only way, but it is, for a certain type of mind, an easy way out. I imagine that the powerful emotion of awe which the mountains stirred in Wordsworth conflicted very seriously with Wordsworth’s very intense admira-

tion for himself, and that therefore he had to justify this awe to his subconscious mind in a way which would not contradict his self-admiration. The way out was to attribute to the emotion some divine source. And St. Theresa, no doubt, had to reconcile an intensely erotic disposition with the conviction that sexual satisfaction was evil, and so she dreamt that she entertained a divine incubus in her bed. Something similar will often account for people taking a mystical view of poetry. Such an attitude is outside consideration; but what is to be substituted for it? Such opposed views as that which holds the best poetry to be didactic, or a pastime, or the product of that specifically aesthetic instinct which no one can prove to exist, are all equally unsatisfactory.

The most noticeable fact about poetry is that it stirs our emotion, and, by doing so, gives us pleasure. It stirs our emotion in two ways which we can distinguish though we can hardly separate them. It arouses in us various emotions in sympathy with those which are expressed or described in the poem, but also it stirs an emotion distinct from these, and, so to speak, underlying them, though blended with them. We can recognize it, but it is very difficult, perhaps impossible to describe. Indeed, many theories about poetry are little more than attempts to describe it in mystical terms. It is also a fact that poetry does give us information. The writer may relate an actual experience of his own, or one which he has imagined as his own, or he may narrate the experience of others or the experience he imagined others to have had, or any or all of these mixed up together. In any case he tells us about his experience, whether that experience was imaginative or actual. But, in poetry, the information which is given is not only about emotion, but it is given in such a way as to stir emotion in the reader.

The old view, which a few people still hold, is that the emotional side of poetry was like jam given to a child to conceal the taste of some medicine hidden

in it, the medicine in this case being a moral lesson or piece of useful information. But this was merely an attempt to justify literature against those who disapproved of it. At all times there have been those who disapproved of literature, against whom it had to be defended. Aristotle, for instance, defended literature from the charges levelled against it by Plato, Sir Philip Sidney against the Puritans of his age, and in recent years D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Robert Lynd and others, against the attacks of Puritans, both moral and scientific. Puritan objections, or at any rate the objections which come from moral or religious puritanism, are not likely to be supported by rationalists, whose tendency is often to fall into what might be called scientific Puritanism, and to object to poetry on two grounds; that it seems to elevate emotion into the position of a final and intuitive judge, and that it seems often to preach doctrines which are anathema to the rationalist, bolstering up the religious attitude and fomenting superstition.

No doubt poetry at times does these things, but not, I think, habitually, and certainly not necessarily, if it is properly approached. It is not to be avoided any more than emotional experiences in life are to be avoided, on the ground that they befog judgment. They may do so, but so long as they are kept in their place—so long as they remain facts and the objects of judgment and are not allowed to arrogate to themselves the status of judgments, they do no harm.

What then is the proper rationalist approach to literature in general and poetry in particular? We must ask, in order to answer this question, as we would of any other such product, what function does it perform in our lives?

If we look at human experience with a scientific eye, and especially at individual experience, it means that we regard it, potentially at least, as a coherent system of relationships. Many of the items which have to be related, and many of the relations, are emotional. What we ad-

mire in other people, and what we strive to attain for ourselves, is experience which is a coherent system, and this is why we can in others often admire and delight in a character which we would not seek for ourselves. It is why we can admire a criminal or a mystic while thoroughly disapproving of crime and mysticism. All irrational views of life, however, such as the religious, are attempts to cut the Gordian knot of experience; the rational view unravels it. But, although human experience is limited by the fact that it happens, in this planet, to human beings, and has a very definite shape, on the whole, in detail it is of infinite variety, so far as the individual is concerned. There are great gaps in every individual human experience, and the system is incomplete. With a large number of items, to make a system out of them there are two ways of setting about the task. One is to reject all those which will not join in, and produce a system, with a number of unrelated items scattered about. The other is to go as far as possible with the material present, and then seek for the items which will fill up the gaps. Obviously, the more the system includes, the less likely it is to be spoilt by further additions, and therefore the more satisfactory it is. And it will be still more satisfactory if its gaps can be filled in, which is to be done by extending the individual's experience. But individual lives do not last long enough, nor provide enough experience to go far towards filling in such gaps, and therefore some sort of substitute has to be found. This substitute is found in communication, which makes the experience of others available to us, and especially in literature which makes experiences which are remote in time and space, similarly available. There is a familiar puzzle problem which consists of a number of dots arranged in a geometrical figure. The problem is to connect them with straight lines, without passing through any dot twice, and without lifting the pen. It is soluble only by going outside the figure, and turning at a further point. Metapho-

rically, this is what we do when we read.

It is easy to see what happens in the case of information. If one reads a scientific work, the experience of the writer is made available to us. We do not have the same experience that he has, but our minds imaginatively imitate it, and the result fills up gaps in the system of our experience. We express this result by saying that we understand the work. What happens with emotional literature is similar, but less simple, because it is much easier to imitate, in our imagination, the practical or intellectual rather than the emotional aspect of an experience. In order to understand an emotional experience, it is necessary to have one's emotions stirred, and so, when our emotions are stirred by literature, we imaginatively imitate the emotions about which we are being told. We do not have the same experience as the writer, but our experience acts as a substitute for what that was, in our system of experience. A substitute may, for some purposes, be more useful than the original. A glass bee-hive is not as good for the bees as a wooden one, but it may, for some purposes, be more useful than the original. A glass bee-hive is not as good for the bees as a wooden one, but it is better for the student of the habits of bees. And so it is with the imitations of experience which poetry leads us to make in our imaginations. The emotion we feel is nothing like as powerful as that original emotion about which we are told, and therefore it is less likely to upset our judgment. But it fills the same place in our system.

Poetry goes out of its way to stir emotion, with the aid of rhyme and suggestion, often in a way which seems gratuitous. From these things, and from rhythm especially, we derive a peculiar emotional pleasure. The rhythm does not induce in us the particular emotion which the poet is describing, but it has the power, like music, to cause an emotional state or mood in which we are rendered sensitive to emotional impressions, and can more easily produce the imagina-

tive imitation of which I have spoken.

But how are we to account for the pleasure which comes from poetry? It is an intensely emotional pleasure, with a peculiar and almost indescribable quality. I think, however, that if we pay close attention to our feelings when reading anything which interests us, whether it is poetry or not, we shall always find something of this peculiar quality of pleasure which owes its intensity, in the case of poetry, to the general state of emotional tension in which poetry is read. Now pleasure seems to be associated with the unimpeded and unconflicting satisfaction of our instincts; and the question therefore is, to what instinct shall we put down the pleasure we derive from reading literature in general and poetry in particular. Now I do not deny that poetry may serve as an escape, or give pleasure through rhythm only, or satisfy a vitiated taste for sentimental and orgiastic emotion, but a liking for poetry is too widely spread among the best of humanity for such explanations to be at all satisfactory. One might as well say that because some people have a perverted taste for eating candles, that the use of candles is for food and not to give light.

McDougall the psychologist has shown pretty conclusively that emotions are tied to the various instincts, as, for example, the instinct to flee from what is dangerous is connected with the emotion of fear. Now one of the most important of human instincts is that of curiosity, which is invariably prominent in the make up of high types of humanity, and which is essential to human development. If education were content to, and concentrated on, the stimulation and satisfaction of infant and adolescent curiosity, instead of, as it so often does, inhibiting it, the world would be a much better place. Now, to curiosity belongs an emotion for which the best term—though it is not McDougall's—is **interest**, and it seems to me that the characteristic emotional pleasure which is experienced in reading literature of any

kind, but especially poetry, is due to the arousal of interest and the satisfaction of curiosity which may be merely the acquisition of information, and not very exciting, but often is understanding, when it is intensely exciting.*

This then, seems to me the rational approach to literature: that we shall regard it as a substitute for experience, including emotional experience, by which means we are enabled to systematize the experience we have and so understand it

rationally. We must see the facts, and we must interpret them rationally, and about literature the facts and this interpretation seem to me to show that it is a means by which we can make ourselves substitutes for experiences we cannot have, or wish to repeat and observe, and through which we are helped to a rational understanding of human experience.

*This account of the part played by curiosity in literary pleasure is, of course, an over-simplification.

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION

BY

M. N. ROY

(Reproduced from "THE MOUNT MAGAZINE")

In a statement made at the termination of his fast, Mahatma Gandhi expressed the following optimistic view: "The tremendous awakening that has taken place in the country during these five days fills me with a hope that orthodoxy will surpass itself and rid Hinduism of the canker of untouchability which is eating into its vitals." At the same time, he declared: "I could not expect all of a sudden to revolutionise Hindu thought." One may be surprised to hear two such discordant notes struck simultaneously. But a little reflection reveals that the pessimistic note which, by the way, is more in tune with the rude realities of the situation, flows logically from the fallacious basis of the Mahatma's optimism. He hopes that the easy success of his threat to put on the crown of martyrdom will induce Hindu orthodoxy to give up voluntarily a prejudice which is so very essential for its very existence. Orthodoxy must cease to be itself if it were to perform what the Mahatma's stout optimism expects of it. What is expected is nothing short of suicide. As such vicarious offerings are seldom made in this world of realities, the Mahatma has ample reason to be pessimistic on after-thought.

A thorough revolutionisation of Hindu thought is, indeed, the condition

for the removal of untouchability together with many other social evils which hamper India's social progress. But this condition can never be fulfilled with the sanction of those very elements which will be destroyed by the revolution. Revolutionisation of Hindu thought means nothing less than the end of Hindu orthodoxy, indeed, of the Hindu religion itself. Superstition and prejudice are the twin pillars on which all religions rest. Remove these props, and the entire venerable edifice of religion collapses. This general rule is all the more applicable to Hinduism which is reared rather upon social customs and habits than upon an established form of worship or a uniform system of theological dogmas supporting certain definite articles of faith. Curiously enough, those who call themselves "aggressive nationalists" base the claim to superiority for Hinduism precisely on this evidence of its backwardness. Even as a religion Hinduism bears the stamp of backwardness. Rigorous monotheism is the highest form of religion.

The essence of all religion is the belief in one or more super-natural forces (personified or in abstract) exercising control or dominion over things and events terrestrial. As soon as man thus resigns his being and will to the inviolable guardianship of an agency, the existence

and power of which are assumed *a priori* he naturally sacrifices reason on the altar of superstition; he barter away his native claim to knowledge for the complacency of prejudices which derive the force of venerable wisdom and divine truth from fraudulent practices. The primitive inquisitiveness gives way to the awe or wonder for powers supernatural, never to be comprehended by human mind. Criticism makes room for credulity. Ignorance becomes bliss, and proudly insults the search for truth as vain and delusive.

These evidences of "spiritualist genius" are not the monopoly of India. They fill the history of all religions. For example, Tertullian, one of the Fathers of the Christian Church, asserted that the problem that had occupied the great philosophers of Greece was no problem for an ordinary Christian artisan. Similarly, to-day, any Hindu pseudo-intellectual would readily repeat the cheap sneer of Swami Vivekananda that Hindu philosophy, begins where Western knowledge ends. Prejudice confounds theology with philosophy, with an impatient gesture of supposed superiority. Even the intelligent do not notice that their specious arguments against the reliability of scientific knowledge only reveals the damaging fact that ignorance is the foundation of religion—that God can dwell only in darkness.

Yet religion represents the ideology of human society at a certain stage of its evolution. Essentially based upon ignorance—superstition and prejudice—religion nevertheless is not a constant phenomenon. Like all social phenomena, it changes constantly. Its forms change together with (under the influence of) the changes in the material conditions of social life. The religion of a people, therefore, is a reliable measure of its social progress. It is the gauge of its civilization.

The religion of primitive peoples takes the form of fetichism, the worship of stones, trees, animals and crudely constructed idols. Gradual development of the faculty of imagination creates the be-

lief in a variety of gods, as so many personifications of natural phenomena the causes of which are unknown to the primitive man. In its earlier stage, the belief in supernatural forces and beings is the product of awe caused by incomprehensible events, such as thunder, lightning, earthquake, flood, draught, pestilence, etc., etc. Fear is the most fertile breeding ground of superstition. Worship takes the form of sacrifice to propitiate the gods. Those officiating at the sacrificial ceremonies gradually grow up into a caste of priests claiming the occult power to know the devious ways and inscrutable wills of the Gods. By virtue of its office, and thanks to the prevalence of superstition, the sacerdotal caste becomes all-powerful. To increase and consolidate its power, the priestly caste promotes superstitious practices so as to raise them to the noble status of social virtue, the evidence of religiosity. The priests can propitiate the angry gods, or secure boons from the milder and more indulgent ones. They are supposed to be in the possession of occult wisdom which makes them conversant with the ways of the Gods who govern the destiny of mankind, ways that are not to be comprehended by the ordinary mortal. Consequently, the word of the priest becomes the law of society. The supremacy of the priest is guaranteed by an elaborate system of traditions, customs, institutions and ceremonies, superstitious observance of which establishes the distinction of proud orthodoxy or meritorious religiosity.

Intellectual progress enables man eventually to rise above the savagery of fetichism, and, later, above polytheistic beliefs. The worship of stones, trees and animals no longer affords him sufficient spiritual satisfaction which he needs as the only solace in the dark and distressing perspective of the chaos created by the dissolution of the primitive tribal society. The disintegration of the tribal and patriarchal social order inevitably shakes the belief in its patron-deities and their sacerdotal ministers. Advance of knowledge undermines the foundation

of gross superstition. The power and position of priesthood are challenged, by the growing desire to enquire into the nature of things. The desire culminates in the erection of the glorious monument of the ancient materialistic and speculative philosophies.

But positive knowledge is still too backward to overwhelm superstition. It leaves the masses unaffected. A new form of religion arises on a more subtle basis which fortifies faith by purging it of fetichistic and polytheistic crudities. Monotheistic religions claim Divine Revelation for their origin. Superstition acquires new strength. For, the dogma of revelation must be established by miracles which, suspending the laws of nature, make the will of God manifest. Popular Credulity makes history out of imaginary legends, and fraudulent practices serve the holy purpose. Laws of nature are the manifestation of the will of God; yet these very laws must be suspended to make the will of God manifest to the vulgar eye! Such a flagrantly illogical and self-contradictory doctrine must be rejected as fantastic and absurd, or accepted as divine, inspired, revealed wisdom since no human mind could possibly have conceived it. Under the new religion, human life continued to be guided, though no longer by a number of discredited deities, yet by the inscrutable will of a supreme being or the mysterious operation of some supernatural force.

Monotheism represents the striving for the establishment of a centralised society on the ruins of the antic order of warring city states or inflated empires—conglomerations of heterogeneous peoples held together by brute force. As such, it attacks all the ceremonies, customs, traditions, institutions, and habits established by the earlier form of religion. Barbarous prejudices descending from the days of fetichism are replaced by the dogmas of theology. The poetic idolatry of polytheistic superstition gives way to the blind faith in a supreme being or the mystic notion of an inexplicable first principle.

But dogmatic theology, futile speculations about the nature of the unknown and unknowable final cause, and the vain efforts for the realisation of the unrealisable, all these start as much from preconceived notions and superstitious beliefs as the fearful worship of fetichism or the devout ceremonies of natural religion. Monotheistic religions free human mind from the bondage of grosser superstition, while encumbering it with more subtle forms of the same virtue or vice which, nevertheless, are not altogether incompatible with social progress. Indeed, under certain conditions of history, monotheistic religion is the ideology of the forces of social evolution. The monotheism of Jesus Christ and later on of Mohammed laid down the foundation of modern European culture.

Vedic Hinduism was a natural religion. In course of time, its social basis—clan and patriarchal family—decayed. The decomposition appears to have reached the climax towards the end of the Epic Era, when the Kshatriya clans were practically all exterminated in a gigantic civil war, depicted in the Mahabharata. But there did not emerge from the chaos any force of a new cohesion. Brahmanic supremacy became absolute in the conditions of social dissolution. The natural religion of the Vedas, instead of being replaced by a higher form of faith, namely, monotheism, degenerated into the fatalism of the Smritis and the absurd extravagances of Pauranic superstitions. Eventually, the quasi-materialistic agnosticism of Buddha spread as the ideology of a great social revolution which was to clear away the ruin of the antique society. But sacerdotal tyranny of the Brahmans had been entrenched behind superstitions, ceremonies and customs which defied reform on the authority of the Vedas, always true and infallible because of their supposed divine origin. This doctrine concerning the origin of the Vedas was very useful for fraudulent practices. Brahmanic absolutism was continuously reinforced by opportune interpolations. Supported by the insidious-

ly fostered forces of popular superstition, Hindu orthodoxy resisted the triumphant march of the Buddhist revolution for nearly a thousand years, and finally overwhelmed it. That was the most tragic event in the history of India. The cause of the defeat of Buddhism was that it was rather nihilistic than monotheistic. On the other hand, the rudiment of materialism inherent in a religion making no place for God, was not boldly developed. Consequently, Buddhism went down in the morass of monastic absurdities and extravagances, and was eventually contaminated by the very corruption it had revolted against.

Victorious Hindu reaction, while arming itself with Sankaracharya's ambiguous monotheism, could consolidate its shaken position only by fomenting the forces of popular ignorance and superstition. The ceremonies and worships of the Vedic religion had been greatly suppressed during the Buddhist period. Whatever still survived, was condemned by Sankar's reform. But Hindu theology, either of the pre-Buddhist era of Sankar, remained a monopoly of the Brahmin intellectual, and monastic orders. The masses of the people were left without any religion except the superstitions of the degenerate Pauranic faith, and a rich store of social prejudices (caste, untouchability, bichar) jealously guarded and persistently fostered by Brahmanic orthodoxy.

To-day, after the lapse of many hundreds of years, the religious life of the masses of the Hindu population is little changed. It is devoid of any spiritual ardour, being a dull monotony of superstitious customs and habits. The ordinary member of the Hindu society is without any definite creed or faith; his idea of God is hazy; he seldom performs any devotional practice regularly; as a matter of fact, he is a remarkably irreligious man. But his orthodoxy flames into fanaticism with regard to the prejudices and superstitions governing his daily life. He blindly believes in the law of Karma

which, if logically interpreted, must dispense with the doctrine of a supernatural force guiding human life. Still he has been taught through ages that this inexorable law is the expression of the inflexible will of God, which can be propitiated only through the scrupulous respect for traditional social customs, and rigid practice of bichar in personal habits. The pernicious doctrine of Karma sanctifies all the inequities and inequalities of the Hindu society. Social tyranny and ostracism bear the stamp of divine justice, the present fate of everybody has been determined by his own karma in a previous birth. It is a vicious circle, with no way for escape. The superstitious belief in the doctrine of karma kills all initiative in an orthodox Hindu. His religion is to observe patiently and passively an absurd mass of time-honoured customs and rights.

In the light of this hastily drawn sketch of the historical background of

(Continued on page 29)

To Help the Best Cause

"The Churches and Modern Thought has probably made more converts to Freethought than any other book except Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. One chapter of the famous work, printed in bold type and covering over a hundred pages, is now being issued in revised and extended form under the title **CONCERNING PROGRESSIVE REVELATION (Watts.)**"—*Literary Guide*, November, 1936.

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(Continued from page 19)

Pandits could hardly have been able to suppress their contempt for Dyaneshwar who adapted the Bhagawadgita into Marathi. Many of the well-known Marathi poets begin with profuse apologies for writing in Marathi instead of in Sanskrit. Perhaps even Milton himself in his heart of hearts would have preferred to write his great epic in Latin instead of in English, if he had thought he could do it equally well.

A very similar controversy in Maharashtra is the so called Vedokta controversy. In the Indian states of Kolhapur and Baroda, the Maratha rulers are claiming to have all the religious ceremonies performed with the help of the Vedic **mantras**; while a great number of their hereditary Brahmin priests refuse to use any but the Pauranic texts. Of course in this case the main point in dispute is the social status of the Maratha caste, the use of Vedic **mantras** in their houses immediately stamping it as a true Kshatriya caste, as the Pauranic texts imply a Shudra origin for it. A man of common sense, however, would see the puerile nature of this controversy. When the whole text of the Rigveda and other Vedas can be bought for a few rupees by anybody, even a **Mlechha**, it is childish to say that you won't recite the Vedic **mantras** in the house of a Maratha. On the other hand, if there is any meaning in religious ceremonies at all, a sensible Maratha should rather prefer the Pauranic Sanskrit to the Vedic Sanskrit; for while there is at least a slight chance of Pauranic Sanskrit being understood by an educated Maratha, who is being married, he is not likely to understand a word of Vedic **mantras**, for Vedic Sanskrit is practically a distinct language and is understood hardly by anybody except professed scholars.

Such fetishistic veneration for an unknown language hinders the spread of rationalism all over the world. The Latin prayers among the Roman Catholics prevent them from realising the real content of these prayers, while rationalist

ideas are more common among those Christian countries which have discarded Roman Catholicism and have adopted prayers in the vernaculars. We similarly read that there was a good deal of opposition to the translation of the New Testament from classical Greek into Modern Greek, from the orthodox people in Greece although—or is it because?—the former is hardly understood nowadays in that country. The educated Parsee community still adheres to the recitation of their prayers in Avesta and Pahlavi though these languages are only known to a very few scholars who are not always agreed on their meaning. The Jews stick to their old Hebrew texts in their prayers and ceremonies though their spoken language is that of the country in which they live, and even those who speak Hebrew in their ordinary life find it difficult to understand the Old Testament. The great respect in which Dnyaneshwari is now held among Maharashtrians is at least partially due to the archaic Marathi in which it is written, though Dnyaneshwar himself wrote it as a protest against the vogue of Sanskrit in his days six hundred years ago. The Muslims recite their prayers in Arabic which is a sealed book to most Muslims at least in India. They attach great importance to teaching children to read the Holy Koran and this is almost all that they mean by religious instruction. Kamal Ataturk did a bold thing indeed in having the Koran translated into modern Turkish and thus supplanting the influence of Mullahs and Maulvis who alone could properly read it in Arabic. The present conflict of Urdu and Nagari scripts is due to the same kind of reverence for form rather than the content of what is written. One would have thought that the controversy should really be settled on scientific, phonetic and educational considerations but it is involved in a maze of irrational ideas, from which rationalists should try their utmost to free it.

(Note: A portion of this article was published over twenty years ago in the "Times of India").

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION

(Continued from page 27)

Hindu Society, the problem of untouchability takes on a more serious aspect than can be abolished with the magnanimous sanction of orthodoxy. It is an integral part of a whole complex of problems. Therefore it cannot be solved, separated from the complex which is the fossilised Hindu society. It is a ludicrous superstition, but exactly as such it is a pillar of Hindu orthodoxy. Untouchability and the allied social curses will go only with Hindu orthodoxy itself, which constructed them to reinforce the undermined foundation of its holy temple. You cannot preserve the temple as an eternal monument, and clear away the debris which serve the purpose of its foundation. Those who devoutly worship in the sepulchral temple of Hindu orthodoxy, therefore, cannot afford to tinker

with its decayed foundation, since that would bring the precarious edifice crashing down upon their heads. At best, they may try to embellish the ugly ruin with superficial patchwork.

Untouchability will go only when the multitudinous victims of Hindu orthodoxy will outgrow the sinister spell of superstition. Hindu society and Hindu thought will be revolutionised not by the martyrdom of a Mahatma. It will be done by irresistible assaults upon the holy rampart of superstition sanctified with the name of religion. These assaults are being delivered even to-day by the inexorable forces of economic necessity which do not obey the law of karma. Theatrical demonstration of liberalism on the part of orthodox caste Hindus are but faint echoes of the thunder of the impending revolution; they are rather feeble and futile efforts to ward off the nemesis of orthodoxy.

WHOSO WOULD BE A REFORMER!

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

(Reproduced from "FREETHINKER")

A correspondent writes me expressing the opinion that I often write what I must know is "unreasonable." He points out that owing to temperament, education, financial necessity and family pressure, the average man or woman does not feel the desire to play the part of a reformer and if he or she did, their position in life restrains them doing so. All I can say in reply to this criticism is that I entirely agree with it. It is a statement of fact. I might demur to the use of the word "unreasonable," but that is not a matter of great moment. Of course, not all men and women, not even most men and women, are cut out for playing the part of a reformer. If they were, there would be no great significance in anyone exhibiting the character. As W. S. Gilbert reminded us, when everybody's somebody, then no

one's anybody. If reformers were found at every street-corner there would be no need to call for volunteers to essay the part. The reformer is scarce because he is necessary, and he is necessary because he is scarce. To some extent, too, reform is in the same category as treason, which never succeeds because when it does it ceases to be treason. In both law and fact treason is an unsuccessful attempt to achieve something. In actual fact a reformer is one who is trying to induce the majority to achieve something which, as often as not, the majority do not care about having. The best thing that George Bernard Shaw ever said was when, many years ago, he was "agitating for baths in the homes of working-men, and someone said that working men did not want baths. "I don't care," rep-

lied Shaw, "whether they do or not. I am not asking for them because working-men want to wash, it is because I object to seeing them dirty." Illustrations of this truth may be seen in the facts that it is the drunkard who pays least attention to a lecture on temperance, the landless man who helps the landlord to break the neck of the man who is advocating land reform, and the Christian who tries to murder the Free-thinker who is trying to improve him. One of the really funny sights I saw at the opening of the war of 1914, was a man whose clothes were made mostly of fresh air, and whose acquaintance with a square meal was of an evidently casual character, complaining that if the Germans came to England they would take everything from us. A reformer is one who tries to induce people to fight for something they don't particularly care about. He begins often in a minority of one. When he finds himself with a majority his value as a reformer has almost gone. He then sinks into line with the normal or looks round for other fields to conquer. But if he is to continue a reformer he must beware the crowd.

* * *

The Need for Courage.

I rather like answering questions. They have always had for me the fascination a chess problem offers to an expert. And I will begin by doing what I have always warned students they must not do—or if they make the attempt it must be done under severely restricted conditions. I am going to explain my position by considering the essential nature of a reformer, the qualities required, without, at least for the moment, taking into consideration a number of circumstances that must to some extent nearly always operate. But just as a chemist can discover the qualities of an element only by isolating it from those other things with which it is usually found in combination, so the social analyst must isolate the reformer from his

normal relations to things and persons in order to determine his specific and distinguishing characteristics. And when we have done this, I think we shall find that most of us may, to some extent, play the part of a reformer, although it is only given to the few to do so on a scale that attracts public attention—often on a greater scale than he truly deserves.

In the first place a reformer must be a man of courage. I do not mean that he must display courage on the physical level. That is cheap enough and common enough. The courage displayed on the physical level is as nearly animal as anything about man. Herbert Spencer once delivered a deserved retort to one who was praising that social myth, the typical Englishman, as one who never knew when he was beaten. Spencer retorted that this was the outstanding quality of a bull-dog. There has never been any difficulty in inducing men to engage in physical combat. It begins with the schoolboy "daring" another boy, and the other boy feeling it is a question of "honour" to do the thing he is "dared" to do. Unfortunately this sort of thing does not die out with boyhood. Men and nations indulge in it, mainly because they lack the development of the higher qualities which would enable them to treat with contempt the invitation of the bully to come down to his level. "National honour" has never been inconsistent with lying, with falsehood, with taking by force what one cannot legally or morally demand. It has only been inconsistent with the practice of the higher qualities that obtain between individuals of the same group.

The reformer must be a man of mental courage, which should always dominate mere animal courage; courage of a kind displayed by Bruno, when he replied to the ecclesiastical court that condemned him to death, "I doubt not but that you give this sentence with greater fear than I receive it." The courage required is that which enables

one to face facts, to brave opinion, to count social status as inferior to mental independence. The reformer must be poles apart from the man who will not read a paper because he does not agree with the opinions expressed, or listen to a speech because he does not agree with the speaker. He must have the courage to stand alone, not merely for the moment but, if necessary, for always. He must not merely hold himself aloof from the crowd, that may be only the pose of the self-conscious, the little-minded, the hallmark of the snob, of the man who has been elevated to a position of prominence by a mere accident, and who manifests his littleness by a constant awareness of what he considers his "dignity." The reformer must by sheer force of character find contentment in being where he is—alone. If it happens others follow him, so much the better, but so soon as his following assumes the proportion of a crowd, he will take another step in pioneering work. When he fails to do this his career as a pioneer is at an end. All this must be an expression of his character. He must be alone without feeling loneliness, independent without consciousness of courage. These qualities must be an essential part of himself not assumed as one assumes clothing of a particular colour and form because it happens to be the fashion of the moment.

* * *

The Need for Understanding

Finally, the reformer must be one with a strictly logical mind. I do not say he must love reason, or be guided by reason, because such expressions mean little. I do not know any form of thinking that does not involve reasoning; it is logical reasoning that is of consequence, beginning with verifiable data, and then proceeding carefully and rigorously to the unavoidable conclusion, which must be finally tested by the appeal to facts. On grounds of mere reasoning, the Freethinker has necessarily nothing in hand against the Roman

Catholic theologian. Great theologians have revelled in reasoning, and the more they reasoned the farther they got from the truth. It was because of bad logic they went astray. Above all the reformer must beware of the use of terms that satisfy without enlightening, express without defining, and allay prejudice without destroying it. It is for lack of these precautions that so many who think themselves free men, are still carrying round with them the ghosts of superstitions and do duty to many a falsity they believe they have discarded.

Finally, the reformer must not confuse knowledge with understanding. A great amount of knowledge may easily be acquired by men of no great intellectual ability. Alone, this is little more than the industry of the boy storing up marbles, exhibited on a higher level. Mere knowledge puffs up its possessor without greatly enlightening others. All the knowledge implied in Darwin's theory of Natural Selection was there before the formulation of his great thesis. Huxley struck the right note when he said of Darwin's theory, "How stupid of us not to have seen (understood) it before." The whole of science is built on knowledge, as bricks are made out of clay. But science is only knowledge in the sense that a stratum of clay represents a beautiful brick building. Science builds on knowledge, but it arises out of understanding.

* * *

The Warfare Of Impulse

But when these things have been said, and have met with agreement, we still have to face the fact that in the world of everyday work there are very few of those working for reform who can be said completely to fill the bill. We have, in what has been said, acted in a justifiably scientific manner. We have taken a particular phenomenon from its associates, isolated it, studied it, and determined its character, so to speak, in *Vacuo*. But when we have done this we have to follow the method of science further and replace the thing we

have isolated back in its normal environment. Then we discover **why** so very few reformers can be credited with a full percentage of marks. For the reformer in actuality is more than a reformer, and therefore is, like the curate's egg, good only in parts. He is a friend, a husband, a father, a child of other parents, he has his own individual tastes in art and literature and amusements, which have no necessary connexion with character as a reformer. We isolate the reformer in order to understand what his character is, and then we restore him to his inevitable place as one of a human group, and as such having individual tastes and desires. We realize that he is, not merely a very complex individual, but also that his behaviour as a reformer is limited and qualified in a number of directions. The claims of family may prevent his going as far as he would wish to go as a reformer. So might his relation to friends, also the claims of the group to which he belongs, or his interests in art, literature, science, sport, and various other things. What we began with thinking very simple turns out on examination to be very complex. Man is really a very complex animal, not in his structure merely,

but in his normal relations to life. He is made up of many loyalties, whereas we usually make the mistake of thinking of but one at a time; and it is these contesting loyalties, allied to a certain indecision of character and timidity of temperament that is accountable for his so frequently falling short of the ideal he has set for himself—or which we set for him.

But we need not be disheartened at the discovery that human nature is—human nature. And I can assure my friendly correspondent that I do not the less value the help given by anyone to an advanced movement because he is not built on heroic lines. None of us is one hundred per cent anything; but if we realize the value of the qualities I have tried to describe, it may at least strengthen us in developing our individual resources. The best of us will fall short of our ideal. The thing that matters is having an ideal that is worth fighting for. After all, we can all do what we can towards doing what we ought, and may the more heartily admire those who managed to attend to the lesser loyalties of life without a too great disregard of the larger ones.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL ACTION

(SUBMITTED TO THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL
CONGRESS, NAGPUR SESSION, 1937)

BY

M. V. V K. RANGACHARI

The language of the modern world is peculiarly different from any Indian accent. The Italian gas stifled Amharic Ethiopia. After Manchukuo, the Chinese tongue is lisping Japanese consonance. East and West are now after a common quest in the Pacific and the Mediterranean seas. The melodies of Spain are still rhythmic, while Hitler and Russia dance in good company. Everywhere, it is the language of gunfire, bomb, aeroplane,

and poison gas. Life in a changing world, stable life, an inherent contradiction, we in India are prone to exclaim. It is not the language of our philosophy, of our sacred texts, or their commentaries so far recorded.

Modern India is however involved in the syntax of the age, as much as any other country. If scientific emphasis has its damaging evils, we may not overlook

its service in bringing the world closer together by land, water and the air. The wireless and radio are not altogether uncreative. In the stream of world-life, what is the social direction here in our historic country?

As indicative of the mass, only a little chip need be studied: (Sthali pulaka nyaya). Albania, a wild country of about a million inhabitants had no official recognition till 1912. Ahmed Zogu became king in 1928. The decade that followed sees the mitigation of poverty, the improvement of agriculture, economic distribution of land, seed-supply, road-development, education, legal code, and church-disestablishment. There Islam, Rome and Greek Orthodox "are all three equal; each, stands on its own feet." Mr. Ch. Bradlaugh Bonnar observes (Literary Guide, Sept., 1937,) that it might very well be copied by Great Britain. Though based on Roman Catholic Convent Schools established in South London, his suggestion has no less force in regard to British Indian policy. Where the bulk of the tax-payers are either Hindu or Moslem, Ecclesiastical Affairs (item 4, list *1 Sch. vii., Govt. of India Act 1935) in the federal legislature remain as standing symbol of external motivation. The spiritual value of the Church of England is one thing. The denominational value of High and Low and other parties is another. To wrench from the tax-revenue collected from over 300,000,000 hands who never had anything to do with Christendom the maintenance of the clergymen in India is a feature which no descendant of freedom-loving Bradlaugh may pass by without comment. Modern Albania, though a small country is a pointer to the equality of credal values, which India, apart from interference, evolves, as she did in the past.

But it is no solace that India may not readily be Christianised through her vast millions. There are spiritual values which she holds very dear, though some would be glad to explain them in terms non-spiritual. (Cf. Modern Review, July

1937, pp. 36-38). Our language to-day has plural import. There are many who speak in terms of spirituality, who yet profess to mean nothing beyond mass-emancipation, and economic re-adjustment. While others professing non-spiritual or materialist allegiance, lose themselves in mysticism deeper than any fanatical adherent of the creeds. So long as both of the sections co-operate for the common purpose of a cause, the divergence of their logical conclusions does not matter. But sooner or later, the discovery of the antithesis is inevitable, and when it should be made, with what consequences for us and to others alike?

The world has not discarded spiritual values, as surely as it has not even now abandoned war, brutal force, and aggression. If any word were to be the prescription for the martial craze, Liberty is the Word whose spell may sometime slide the crushing heels of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin from off the victimised race. Patriotism that cramples personality led to war. It is not a mere coincidence that the era of the aeroplane and the radio is also the era of Fascism and Nazism. Mass-subjugation is aided by science. But patriotism and war are not human facts essentially. They are mere abstractions. "They belong to the sphere of Metaphysics, just as much as those ancient theological conceptions of God-head and Trinity for the sake of which people so gladly slew and tortured each other. But as soon as the sunshine of real humanity makes itself felt, the Metaphysics of patriotism and war are dissipated as surely as those of Theology." (Havelock Ellis).

But we now know the limits of the shine that may ever inspire a humanist. We know how huge a mass the sun's body is, the sun, as also millions of stars much bigger than the sun. The vast distances of inter-stellar space remain yet dark and cold. These recesses envelope light even as ignorance and superstition darken human intelligence. (Cf. Gita V, 15, Agnanenavritam gnanam tena muhyanti jantavah; Gnanenatu tadagnanam

yesham nasitammatmanah, teshamaditya-
vat gnanam prakasayati tatparam).
Wisdom is covered over by ignorance,
hence beings are deluded, saith the Gita,
says also Havelock Ellis in a western
context. Here as elsewhere men learn
saner methods of evaluating the facts of
life.

If the Hindu texts sustain their mes-
sage yet, our philosophy may not stand-
still in the changing world, looking help-
less on the past rather than hopeful into
the future. Time-thinking, however
venerable, may prove dangerous, even
suicidal. Especially because the opposi-
tion raised on the ground of spiritual and
material values is not based on any
divergence in substance, the battle with
materialist philosophy is not founded on
fact, but rests merely in the fiction of
verbal construction. The logical langu-
age-behaviour does not warrant the
assumption of an antithesis in regard to
quantities about which we are not
in a position to frame a definition.
In an ever-expanding human experi-
ence, the classifications on the foot-
ing of Theism are divisional rather than
synthetic, disruptive and not unifying.
To the extent to which the philosophical
quest is after one-ness, these divisions
should be held unphilosophical.

On the other hand, the philosophy
of the physical, historical and social
sciences is more synthetic and better
harmonised in our time than in any pre-
vious generation. The whole language of
science which may be named "physica-
lism" is closely linked up with the thesis
of the unity of science. (The Tongues of
Men, p. 121, Watts). It shows consis-
tently higher levels of integration acting
throughout the whole of the evolutionary
process—crystals changing into colloids,
colloids to living matter, living matter to
plants and animals, then humans, and
these into societies. Societies themselves
consistently evolve to higher levels, lead-
ing to ever increasing perfection of co-
operation between groups of human
beings which make up the civilised world.
That is the antithesis to the craze for ag-
gression and war.

On the ultimate origins and ends of
life and the universe men may only spe-
culate. The theist is no more competent
to get in direct touch with the divine,
than his more obstinate rival. Only in
regard to the method of approach to the
problems of existence, organisation, and
general outlook is there any variation
between tradition and modernism. The
materialist (or physicalist, to use a word
with less Historic odium) challenges that
the scientific basis clarifies where mysti-
cism obscures, that it helps to present a
logically consistent clear-cut programme
while the pursuit of ill-defined unknown
idealism hinders progress. The belief that
sometime, somehow, the forces for wel-
fare will marshal themselves may prove
a dangerous illusion, for intuitions are
often known to have misled in history.
The forces of reaction have soiled the
pages of social life too much in the past
to rouse an enthusiasm in their favour
hereafter. "Though he slay me, yet will
I trust in him" was not said to prolong
life on the planet.

The modern method is experimental,
relative, and ultra-physical, instead of
being dogmatic, absolutist, and metaphy-
sical. It is not every programme political
or economic that inevitably raises the
backbone of society. Through fancied
opposition to materialism, one should
not have allowed one's logic to betray
itself into such belief. (Modern Review,
July, 1937, pp.37, 38). The issue lay
between evolution, plan, design, and the
scientific advance of social action on the
one side, and old time ideals, grace from
without, Fiat, submission to fate, on the
other. Criticism on ideological grounds is
not improved by inventing new charges
like opportunism, Machiavellian tactics
against those with whom we are not in
agreement. The passions of strife exist
in civilization with the gall of a bygone
time in them. That is a stubborn fact.
Scratch any contest, we are faced with
mediaeval associations of fanaticism, and
bigotry. So long as the priest held the
key to science, it was imprisoned behind
bars. It grew at all, looking faith squarely

in the face, and in spite of her persecution and wrath, not under her shelter. Historical spirituality was dictation, caprice, keeping at bay the normal flow of events, effort to break the cause-effect relation. If politics were ever a science, and social philosophy were to attempt to analyse the syntax of that science, neither would permit the encroachment of the mystical into their field. Historical science is an attempt to get over the inconclusive problems of the present, resolving them into moulds of general induction based on past experience of socialist practice.

Modes of our philosophical expression have crossed the seas and our vedanta reached Kant, Spinoza, Shelley, Wordsworth, Emerson, Schopenhauer and Hegel in the west. Newtonian Mechanics, Darwinian Evolution, and Einsteinian Relativity may not be excluded from the Indian soil. Insulation of thought-current is impossible now since "the living space of man is pretty wide". In handling the linguistic problems which beset India, we cannot minimise the role of the English tongue that put us in contact with the world. "The shell of our immediate future surrounds our heads which are fraught most with a germ of futurity. To be really alive, we must feel this active personal interest in what is going on, and our speech must serve our natural familiarity with our surroundings". (The Tongues of Men, p. 20). This refers to the language of modern science. It is equally true that in any context of situation in which we find ourselves, "there is a hang-over of the past". (ibid). We may never release ourselves from the mode of thought recorded in the Indian texts. In fact that retains its primary hold, and is our first language.

If we are to evolve a logical language-system, our statements after analysis must be verifiable in the space-time world, and the words used must be linked consequentially with words referring to immediate experience. Referring to Yoga-practice of to-day, for instance, western treatment recognises that suspen-

ded animation induced through the hypnotic state or by means of drugs tends to prolong the duration of life for years, though the periods of trance were short and temporary. That is not to advocate Ganja-doping, nor the undisciplined holding of breath in the name of Pranayama, which may lead to injury. But the indication is clear that the regulation of the supply of oxygen affects the oxidation of the brain-cell substance, stops mentation, and conserves during those furtive moments energy which biological and psychological press-buttons would otherwise send to waste in the normal waking state. It is the revaluation of Yoga-diction in terms of experience gained from occidental therapy. Yogascience has no geographical limits or customs-tariff and boundaries.

This verification in science is not just of single statements, but of our entire system of statements. If Yogic breath-suspension (Pranayama) is good for the individual, it should equally be good for an entire community to with-hold its breath for short periods and at well-measured intervals. It should enable the social order to re-adjust better to withstand onslaughts from invading life-killing germs, and disintegrating forces. The in-take, out-going, and retentive forms of breath (Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna) are applicable to the entire country. Politically, we exhaled through non-co-operation with the ruling atmosphere, and its structural institutions, remained in that condition (Sushumna) with eyes and other senses closed to foreign stimuli, offered passive resistance, Satyagraha. We have begun just to inhale gently, having decided on office-acceptance, in a way working the mechanism of the body-politic. There is the corresponding economic pranayama, exhalation by boycott of Lancashire trade, suspension, determined to upset the economic policy of Britain in Indian finance in Military expenditure, salt and drink revenue and inhalation through either nostril implementing the constructive programme of Khadi, peasant and

worker movement, Harijan, and other social re-adjustments. Science ought to be fool-proof, and social. Yoga may rise into the scientific level provided, of course, care is taken to insulate the apparatus even as with any experiment in a new-built laboratory. We should guard against any possible discrepancy creeping into our social endeavour. If that one danger could be avoided, the Yoga of Indian integration that has withstood the test in recent decades proves itself capable of yet wider application, just as Yoga-discipline is demonstrably potent in inducing firm control over the individual organism. The law is scientific: however furtive the attempt, however short our power to withstand, the result is bound to be far-reaching. The very thought of Yoga in spirit excelleth the text of the written word. (Jignasurapi yogasaya shabdabrahmativartate, Gita, VI, 44). As indeed, any attempt however slight, at practice outweighs a thousand scriptural saws. To know this, however feebly, emancipates greatly from fear (Swalpa-mapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat, Gita, II, 40) since it leads to action based on wisdom. If the socialist Dharma is even furtively observed, we stand absolved from great fear of internal or external exploitation and want.

Allegiance to traditional formulae is our snare in this respect. Not on all points do the old texts carry us right. By the side of marvellous astronomical calculations, our forefathers reared up superstitious beliefs like Rahu and Ketu devouring the sun and the moon. We may never grant they are infallible, as when the satellite, moon is placed above the primary stars. (Nakshtranam aham sasi, Gita, X, 21). It is mere *a priori* knowledge that took for granted that the moon lent brilliance to the stars in heaven (Cf. Taittiriya Upanisad, I, 5, Chandramasavava sarvani jyotigumshi mahiyante). It is not consistent language behaviour when we know the relative position of the earth, the sun, moon, moons revolving round other planets like jupiter and saturn, stars which are much

more massive than the sun itself, and the novae, and super-novae that are flaring up into the telescope with bewildering volume and light from unexpected quarters. Spectral analysis of light from distant stars indicates their composition, and distances in light-years are calculated both from the intensity of the ray (magnitude) and their relative geometrical positions. Newtonian gravitation has been extended to imponderables like radiation, which Einstein formulated in the Relativity Theory. The curvilinear propagation of light in gravitational fields made out from the deflection of the perihelion of mercury, and the displacement of star-light during total eclipses of the sun are now sought to be improved upon through yet more precise formulae by Sir Shah Sulaiman, whose explanation regarding greater diffusion of the spectral lines in the rim of the sun-disc than at the centre is full of promise. The cyclic regularity of the sun-spots affecting magnetic storms, and the seasons of the earth; flights in strato-sphere to study the cosmic rays and their bearing on life on earth; the discovery of several new planets rushing fast in their elongated orbits; and of extra-galactic nebulae receding away from one another in an expanding universe, as it were; that is the vision of Viswarupa (samdarsana yoga) the universe understood now. Science is every day opening new pages in the weird book of nature, and every new discovery brings us nearer to it in an increasing degree of approximation.

Observation in the micro-cosmic field is alike extended. Experiments in atomic-physics reveal the emptiness of the atom, which is mostly space with a few rings of minute negative charge (electron) around a tiny nucleus (proton). Except looking to the probability within a ring, the immense speed of the electron defies its detection at any position. But we feel its presence from the photo-electric effect produced on the plate. A solar system packed up within an atom is a picture which should help to resolve the antithesis between matter and

energy so far imagined to be unbridgeable. While the sun, the stars, the earth and the moon may be described as visible, embodied, predicated and with abode, we may fairly equate the interstellar space which is far larger, and of which nothing is known except to guess to be cold dark empty void, with Adrisya, anatmya, anirukta, and anilayana (Cf. Taitiriyā, II, 7). The imperceptible yet certain vast emptiness in the atom, between the proton and revolving electron is the invisible, unembodied, unpredicated, and abodeless Avyakta. The physical universe, astronomical as also atomic, is but a tiny fraction of space, Akasha, which is mostly left unfathomed, unfilled. "With a fragment of Mine I pervade the universe, I yet remain." (Gita, X. 42. Vishtabhyaham idam kritsnam ekamsena sthito jogat) "A fourth is the universe and beings, three-fourths is beyond" (Padosya viswabhutaṇi, tripadsyaamritam divi, Purusha Sukta) "The universe came out of THAT, Brahman is yet full" (purnasya purnamadaya purnamevavasishyate). The *a priori* statements in the texts may accord with, and fit into the scheme of modern scientific language, based on observation and experiment. Where they

do, there is confirmation of Sabda Brahma by human experience. Where the scriptures do not bear out experience, or are equivocal, the standard of judgment is the latter, with reference to which they need to be re-interpreted, or re-valued, to furnish a consistent logical system. We may implement if need be the atomic theories of Kanada, with his Triyanuka in the Vaiseshika Sutras, the Gunasamkhya of Kapila, the Yoga of Patanjali, the Apurva of Jaimini Mimamsa, and even the Vedanta of Badarayana by more modern explorations into the Atomic Physics of Arambhavada, post-Darwinian evolution on Parinamavada, the existence and properties of a medium like Ether to explain action-at-distance like Apurva, and the nature of Intelligence comprehending existence and consciousness and bliss. But we cannot suffer fragmentary logicisation and inconsequent use of language. We cannot base our work on facts not verifiable in space-time world, nor may the words used by us fail to be linked consequentially with words referring to immediate experience, and our entire system of statements depending on such experience.

(to be continued)

CORRESPONDENCE

Pandit's Chawl, B.S. Road,
Dadar, Bombay No. 14.
Date, 21-1-1938.

Mr. Abraham Solomon seems to have been carried away a bit by his enthusiasm to describe what he terms "the purest conception of God" on page 5, in your issue of January 1938. "A Materialist recognises" he says "that it is a power, eternal, infinite, unknowable". How does Mr. Abraham Solomon know that the power is unknowable; that the future generations will not succeed in knowing it fully? Again it is "a power whence we came," of which we are a part and whither we return after

death". Does this not savour of the religious conception of soul? Have we got an existence apart from our bodies which can return to that power after the death and disintegration of our bodies?

Will Mr. Abraham Solomon kindly explain in the next issue of "Reason"?

J. R. Pradhan.

"A power eternal, infinite, unknowable" is Sir Leonard Hill's well-known definition of the cosmic power which we all indeed feel to be ever present and operable. Nothing would exist if that power was not ceaselessly at work. We do not know what its essence is though we have no doubt

that it is not a personal power outside the cosmos as religionists believe. For ought we know it may be electricity. All lives are animated by this cosmic power; all lives are merged back into that power after death as the components of living organisms dissolve into their elementary principles. To believe this is certainly not of the same nature as the religionists who posit a personal power of extra-mundane existence and the soul as a living entity.

"What 'substance' or 'reality' or 'thing in itself' is, we do not know and cannot know. But while many attempts are made under the name of 'the Absolute,' etc., to identify this with 'God', it is really nothing of the kind. The belief or disbelief in an external 'reality' is a problem of philosophy, it has no genuine connection with theology. To identify the two is a mere dialectical subterfuge. Mere existence is an ultimate fact that must be accepted by all. It is only on the question of its nature that controversy can arise." (Theism or Atheism—Chapman Cohen.)

Abraham Solomon.

The Rationalist Association & Sunday
Freedom League (Inc.)

315 Victoria Arcade Bldg.,
Shortland St., Auckland C1.

20th October 1937.

It is with great pleasure that we have been receiving "Reason" from you each month. We feel sure that this paper will go far in the spreading of truth and humanitarianism amongst the masses of your country and we feel confident also, that its high literary standard and its deeply philosophical content will gain for it a great reputation and a wide sale in the whole English-speaking world.

Again offering you our congratulations and our hearty wishes for your future success.

Yours fraternally,
D. McGeachen,
Hon. Secretary.

To

The Editor of the Reason,
Rationalist Association,
Bombay.

Sir,

Please accept our congratulations for the courageous and the very refreshing criticism you have made on the Prohibition Policy of the Bombay Ministry. Your article is not only well-informed, but it also bristles with apt suggestions for carrying out the constructive reformatory work of lessening the drink evil in the country. We take the view that the suggestions, put forward by you, are so practical as well as practicable that the Government can attain the object they have in view with the willing co-operation of all earnest citizens, and without incurring the odium of the present generation by the sacrifice of an established revenue derived from excise on liquor. They merit the immediate attention of the Congress Governments as well as of the wire-pullers of the Congress apparatus.

With due respect we commend to them your very original remedy of tackling the drink evil by the device of the issue of coupons to people to whom drink is as necessary for keeping themselves fit as any exercise could keep them fit. The coupon system has the double advantage over the present proposals of the Government of total prohibition, viz., that of securing for a minority of the drinking population their daily or periodical necessity, as well as that of preventing the drink evil and the drink habit contaminating the remaining part of the population.

The first of these beneficial aspects would reduce the chances of illicit distillation to a minimum, for the simple reason that the hankering of those addicted to drink would be satisfied by the regulated system of rationing by means of coupons, which for want of any opportunities to be satisfied, in the face of the prohibition law which the Government will have to pass, will seek its fulfilment by liquor obtained from illicit sources of supply.

The second result could also be attainable by proclaiming on a very extended scale that the coupons would be issuable only to registered claimants, who should come forward by a fixed date to have their names and claims registered, after which, the Government should declare, no claims would be so registered.

The effect of the registration would be that those adults, to whom drink has become a second nature, would alone stand the chance of obtaining liquor, and there would be no more recruits to the drinking fraternity receiving recognition of their claims.

This will entail some enlargement of establishment expenditure, but since the Government are prepared to go to the length of sacrificing the whole of the excise revenue, the expense will be justified in any case; at any rate, there will not be the nett loss of revenue with which the Government are faced at present. The coupon system will have to be in force for a number of years, during which the Government will have ample scope and opportunities to explore other sources of revenue, and for tapping income derived by public utility concerns.

Since the policy of the Congress Governments is mainly dictated by the desire to eradicate the drink evil, both their laudable desire as well as practical politics require that the end should be achieved without dislocating the public convenience. The loss of revenue threatened by the prohibition programme would, for example, damage the cause of education in the country for a generation. Secondary education is at present neglected by the Government, because they have no money at their disposal, and the self-supporting education scheme for the primary stage has also been invented for the same reason. Private profiteering has reduced secondary education to the degrading limits of exploitation as any other private business.

The coupon system may also be reinforced by wholesale manufacture of liquor by the Government themselves. This

proposal need not shock the puritans. On the contrary, while the transition period from intemperance to abstinence is being passed, it is the duty of the Government to make it impossible for any private citizen to exploit the situation, and to accumulate wealth at the expense of other citizens. It is perfectly reasonable that the state should step in between such exploiters and the consumers. Sales can be graded to suit the requirements of the revenue needed.

Your other suggestion of compulsorily closing the liquor shops on days of pay of the wage-earners merits the immediate attention of the authorities pending every other consideration for effecting abstinence or temperance.

Yours truly,

G. S. Koppikar, M.B.B.S.,
N. B. Kudalkar, B.A., LL.B.

Bandra, 23rd Jan. 1938.
(Hill Road).

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REASON

(Estd. 1931)

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Subscription for "Reason" Re. 1½ & Foreign 2 Shillings annually.

At the Secretaries' Table.

The formation of the Rationalist Contact Club will be pleasant news to local members. The need of a place for rationalists to meet and know one another has long been felt but as the R.A.I. is not in a strong financial position this could not be done.

Due to the fact that a few young members of the Association have taken the initiative and decided to run the club this has now become possible. The formation of this club will enable us to have many activities which we could not have

so far. The Library of the R.A.I. will now be at the premises of the club and members may issue books from there. Weekly discussion classes will be started as soon as possible and notices regarding the same will appear in local papers. Non-member of the Contact Club but members of the R.A.I. will meet on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of every month. We expect all our members to help in making this venture a success.

The Secretaries of the R.A.I. will henceforth be found every evening between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the premises of the club which are at 'Buona Casa' 3rd floor, Sir Phirozsha Mehta Road, Fort, Bombay.

For further information regarding the club please interview or write to the Secretary, Mr. J. Doyle at the same address. The club will be open every day from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Abraham Solomon.

Jt. Hon. Secretary.

We gratefully acknowledge the following:—

D. J. N. Lee, I.C.S. Saugor, C.P. Rs. 10/-, P. N. Agate Rs. 5/-, Dr. D. D. Karve, Poona Rs. 5/-, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Bombay Rs. 5/-, I. D'Avoine, Bombay Rs. 5/-, C. D'Avoine, Bombay Rs. 5/-, E. D'Avoine, Bombay Rs. 5/-, D. S. Tanawde, Bombay Rs. 5/-, Dr. A. D. Ballegar, Bombay Rs. 5/-, Dr. S. K. Vaidya, Bombay Rs. 5/-, M.P. Pai, Kumbakonam Rs. 5/2, Prof. S. K. Muranjan, Bombay Rs. 5/-, Mirza A.R. Beg, Peshawar Rs. 5/-, Pesi. C. Mewawala, Calcutta Rs. 5/-, J. B. H. Wadia, Bombay Rs. 5/-, K. T. Chandy, London, 8s. Dr. S. L. Joglekar, Bombay Rs. 5/-, R. G. Rs. 5/-, N. M. Bhathena, Bombay Rs. 5/-, Aziz F. Nakhuda, Surat, Rs. 5, Nur Jehan Azad, Hollywood, California \$1.

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Liberty, the one word beside
which all others are vain—
Ingersoll

REASON

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BIRTH CONTROL AND THE CONGRESS

By R. D. KARVE.

It seems that kings, presidents, premiers, etc., are the fittest persons to open Congresses, Conferences and other meetings, whatever their objects may be. And so, Premier Kher was invited to open the Population Conference in Easter. Now as Birth Control is an important problem concerning population, a reference to it could hardly be avoided. And, thanks to the rigid discipline enforced in the Congress ranks, Premier Kher rose to the occasion and bravely repeated his lesson. This is all the more admirable because, unlike Hitler, Dr. M. K. Gandhi has not the power to shoot people, and of course his famous tenet of "Ahimsa" would prevent him if he had. He can obviously remove him from his post, but what does that matter to a

Congressman? I am reminded of the way in which recruits are trained to discipline in the French Army. An Indian friend of mine fought the last war as a volunteer in the French Army and this is the way he was trained. A piece of white paper being shown to him, he was asked, "What colour is this paper?" Of course he said "White, Sir." "You rascal, what do you mean by calling it white when you can see that it is red?" "No Sir, it is white." The officer gave him eight days' confinement for this temerity. After the eight days were over, he was again asked, "What colour is this?" "White, Sir." "I think it is green, look at it closely." By this time, he had learnt the lesson. "Of course, it is green, Sir." "What do you mean, you stupid,

can't you see it is white?" "Of course, Sir, how foolish of me? It is certainly white".

What the Congress dictator thinks, the rank and file of the Congress are obliged to think, or at least to say. It is said that the Congress is for Truth. But that is only one of Gandhiji's experiments with truth. Anybody who makes experiments with truth cannot of course be expected to speak the truth all the time. Then it would not be an experiment. You speak it once in a while and see what happens. That is an experiment. How can any sensible man expect a politician to speak the truth all the time?

Premier Kher undoubtedly stood the test of discipline. Of course he was rather roughly handled by Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee afterwards, but that was only to be expected. When you talk nonsense about population at a population conference, what else can you expect? Of course Prof. Mukerjee might have considered that Mr. Kher was only doing his duty as a soldier of the Congress and soldiers are not supposed to have brains.

The power of the dictator may be guessed from the fact that even the President of the Congress, Babu Subhash Chandra Bose, had to bend before it. Perhaps it is worth while to be President of the Congress even at that price, but I wonder whether Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would have been so sheepish. President Bose, having openly declared that the population of India would have to be restricted if at least the necessities of life were to be provided to all Indians, was not prepared to say how this desideratum was to be effected. However, he did not think it necessary to endorse the inanities enunciated by the Dictator in this matter, as Premier Kher bravely did.

Let us examine for a moment Gandhiji's position in the matter and see if it has any connection with truth as seen by ordinary mortals. Of course,

Gandhiji's position is quite independent of common sense, since he receives direct communications from his god, or his conscience or whatever he calls it! He asserts that he has himself succeeded in practising birth-control by means of self-control. It can be abundantly proved from his own autobiography and other writings that this is certainly not true, but apparently he has received instructions from his inner voice to say what is not true! An experiment with truth! Gandhiji has asserted that every single birth of a child in India makes him sad. In spite of that, and his professed ability to practise birth-control by self-control, he did get a few children. Why? In his autobiography, he says that after a certain date, he has observed complete abstinence. Of course we take his word for it, but by comparing dates as given by him, it turns out that he succeeded in this business of self-control only after 24 years of married life! And he also says that this was what he was striving for during all that time. It has to be remembered in this connection that Gandhiji has shown great command over himself in other matters, especially in fasting for long periods at a time at the slightest provocation. And a man who can fast for 21 days at a stretch took 24 years to gain command over himself in the matter of sex, even when, on his own admission, it was so ardently desired by him. After that, Gandhiji expects the man in the street, who cannot resist the temptation to smoke for even ten minutes and insists on breaking rules in this matter whenever he can, to practise birth-control by self-control. This indicates, not only utter ignorance of sexology, but utter disregard of logic and common sense as well, and for ordinary mortals, I might have added, crass stupidity. For one must really be hopelessly stupid not to see the implications of self-control as a method of birth-control. Gandhiji opines that the interval between two successive children, if there are to be any

children at all, should not be less than five years, and that sex intercourse must never have any other object than procreation. Such a dirty thing as sex intercourse can only be excused if the end in view is excusable, even if it is not desirable! On that view, supposing that one cannot decently bring up more than three children, such a couple can only be allowed sex intercourse three times in their lives, at intervals of at least five years at a time. This involves complete abstinence of five years at a time for ten years, and then for ever afterwards! Even supposing this desirable, to expect the man in the street to practise that is little short of idiocy. For it is to be remembered that Dr. Gandhi not only recommends this as an ideal, but considers it as a practicable method of birth-control for everybody. Here is an instance of how religion can make people mad. Is it any wonder that sensible people will not agree with this even if all the Dictators and Premiers in the world shout themselves hoarse over it?

Another variety of madness is exhibited by people like "Social Reformer" writing letters to the "Times of India", and even better-informed persons, who pretend that the birth-rate can be diminished by raising the standard of living, by education, social uplift and so forth.

It is precisely the contention of birth-controllers that all these desirable things cannot be effected without limiting the population. These good people have never pointed out a way of raising the standard of living, with a population increasing without limit. Their remedy is like saying that the best way to live long is not to die young! A population in want of food will not listen to lectures on social uplift. The first thing they want is food. If you give them that, you can talk about other things afterwards with some chance of being listened to.

These people forget at the same time that no arguments about over- or under-population, or even the ethics of self-control, will affect personal conduct. The only arguments which will do that are the personal arguments, because people do want to be able to bring up their children properly, or at least not to starve because of too many children, and most of them will also consider the health of the mother, though I have seen specimens of men in India, who will only consider their own pleasure and nothing else because after all, if one wife dies, they can get another! So far as human conduct is concerned, other arguments are nowhere. Practical birth-controllers who want to do propaganda know this quite well. To them, other arguments have only an academic interest.

SPIRITUALISM

By John Rowland

The majority of Christians—and there are millions of them—believe in the immortality of the soul. The soul is what they call it, while Spiritualists call it the spirit. This spirit appears to be the thinking part of mankind; yet not the mind itself, they tell us. Then according to such reasoning, the mind is the seat of the spirit. Nobody appears to know what the mind is. Yet

the Spiritualists say the mind, which they cannot define, is the seat of the spirit, which is also undefinable.

We know we can think; can plan, can dream, and we can picture in our minds scenes we cannot see with our eyes. For instance, I was born in a village in England. I can picture that village as I left it 50 years ago. In

other words, I can **think** in pictures. They are unreal, yet as real as life itself to the **mind**.

I have no knowledge of a former life. This is the only life I am conscious of. Then it appears that the mind was born with the body. In other words, my mind, or spirit, if preferable, did not exist until the body existed. Then is not the body the seat of the mind? And the mind the seat of the spirit? It appears that the spirit relies on the mind for its existence, and the mind on the body. (Some body). So then, without a body there can be no mind, and incidentally, no spirit.

Is it possible that when this body dies we shall be clothed with another body? Paul wrote of bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial. But Paul was a visionary, a dreamer.

If there are celestial bodies, and after the death of our present body, the spirit is clothed by one, why do all the departed ones appear in the earthly body? It cannot really be the earthly body which has turned to dust and ashes; and it cannot be a shadow of that body, because nothing casts a shadow but a solid body. Therefore, it seems to me, when a psychic really sees a spirit clothed in the earthly body, it is imagination. It is a picture of the one they knew, photographed on the mind. And they see this apparition through the eyes of the sub-conscious mind, so to speak. It is not the departed one, but a visible memory of that one. If these apparitions would speak of their own volition, then we might say they are real. But it is never the apparition that speaks, but the medium.

I once went to a Spiritualist meeting in a town of 20,000 people. I had been in that town over 20 years. Many people knew me, or had heard of me, through my writings. And being more or less a Materialist would put me among the exceptions. That would make me more noticeable in a general way. Many people talked about me,

wondered about me, and prayed for me. I was considered one of the black sheep. Being one of the black sheep made me conspicuous.

The medium at that meeting was a local man. Rather a public man. Mixed much with the people. Had listened to what they had to say about me. Had gathered that I was an unbeliever; a Philistine, as it were. And I, being rather open-minded, had told many people my circumstances. Everybody knew I had had a boy who became an epileptic, and at last died in fits. And nearly everybody knew I had said he looked to be about 16 when I saw him in the casket, although he was not much over 13. Everybody knew or thought they did, I needed to be reformed. Everybody knew, or thought they knew, I was a bad man. And everybody, or nearly everybody viewed me through their own colored glasses. There were Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and many other smaller sects who all knew, or thought they knew, I was either going to hell or was eternally lost, and needed to be saved. The Spiritualists were preaching a new doctrine of the spirit. They believed, or pretended to believe, that departed spirits could be communicated with. They were capable of speaking (the departed spirits) with their loved ones left on earth—through a medium.

Well, the upshot of it was, I got a message from some young fellow who was very near and dear to me, who looked to be about 16 years of age. He said (through the medium, of course) that I wasn't to worry, because he was all right. He urged me (again through the medium) to try and live a righteous life and become a Christian. And a lot more to the same effect.

There are thousands of people in the world who are Spiritualists, who are perfectly sure they are right. And there are hundreds of thousands who are sure the Spiritualists are wrong, and they themselves are right.

There have even been great men, such as Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge, who were most emphatic in their belief in Spiritualism. Perhaps if they had not been brought up to believe that the Bible was absolutely true, they would not have believed in a hereafter. And if they had not believed in a hereafter they could never have become Spiritualists. If they had studied real life more, and psychology less, they would have been able to see that every living thing dies, animate and inanimate, and no longer maintains its identity. They might also have been able to see that every living thing that moves has a soul, or central kernel of life. They might have also been able to ask why all these things should live again, and where? Also why man should be an exception? And why it should be necessary to live again?

The Bible is a priceless old Book for antiquity. It contains much wisdom as well as a great deal of error. It certainly contains many precious grains of truth, but they need to be sifted from the chaff.

Not many people believe that both Solomon and Job were agnostics. Job once asked: "If a man die shall he live again?" And Solomon has asked: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" And he has said—"There is no difference between a man and a beast. All goeth to one place. All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." He also has said regarding the spirit—"The body returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it." Meaning what? It looks as if the spirit of man is the gift of God, and being a part or particle of God, returns again from whence it came, as a drop of water returns to the ocean from whence it was taken, and loses its identity. Where then are the identical souls that Spiritualists speak of?

(Religions mostly depend on the two imaginary entities: God and Soul. And

mediums and their managing agents make capital out of these.—Ed.)

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Banish me from Eden when you will; but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.—Ingersoll.

The decisive defeat in life is not to remain poor, but to become broken in spirit, to suffer an invasion of the sacred citadel of the will. The man who keeps that inviolate has triumphed, and has indeed beaten failure to its knees.—Lord Snell.

Not only is Rationalism not antagonistic to a sane nationalism, but it will immensely help in building up a united, prosperous, and self-respecting India.—R. P. Paranjpye.

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CHARON'S FERRY

By Prof. J. O. BARTLEY

(Note: According to classical ideas, the shades of the dead arrived at and were ferried across the river Styx, in the border region between life and death, by the ferryman Charon, an immortal. On touching the water of this dark river, they entered upon the final process of spiritual death, in which they gradually forgot life, and reached that stage of consciousnessless squeaking and gibbering thinly like bats, which Homer describes, oblivion their only future. A suicide, having no coin placed in the mouth of his dead body, was unable to pay the ferryman, and so cross the Styx and enter Hades. Therefore he could neither return to the zest of life, or gain the peace of complete oblivion.)

Dramatis Personae.

Charon: the ferryman of Styx.

The shade of a man.

The shade of his wife, Damaris.

(Rhadamanthus, the porter of Hades, is heard but does not appear).

Scene: a wood on the near bank of the river Styx. The man appears looking about him. He appears about thirty, and is dressed in the Roman fashion of the first century A.D.

Man: Damaris! Damaris!

Voice: Charon, I command thee. Dare not to tarry.
Thou knowest that one comes. Make haste, away!

The voice seems to come from the far side of the river. The man hides in terror. A boat is heard crossing the stream. It reaches the bank and Charon, very old, appears drawing the boat up after him so that the bow is just visible. As he does so the rope breaks; he stumbles and throws down the broken piece in disgust.

Charon: Ugh, there it goes again. 'Tis ever so.
I have been ferryman for untold years
And never do I get a bit of rope
But is half rotten. She is leaking too.
And I'm afraid to bear hard on my paddle
Lest it should break, and tumble me head first
Into the Styx. I need a rest from ferrying:
I am all full of aches—and each new comer
Insists on telling me his history.

The man reappears and speaks to Charon, who is lugubriously inspecting his broken rope.

Man: What was that awful voice? Who spoke?

Charon: Rhadamanthus.

Man: I thought an angel spoke—
Or the terrible voice of God!

REASON

- Charon: Rhadamanthus is no god—
Only a surly porter who browbeats me
Because the ferryman must do his bidding.
- Man: Porter?—What ferryman?—What place is this?—
What ferryman are you,—
- Charon: Charon I am,
The ferryman of Styx, for ever doomed
To boat you and your likes across the river
And set you down in Hades.
- Man: God! In Hades!—
Then the old gods were true. There is no heaven.
I am still foul with sin; my load still on me,
And never was removed....A woman?
Have you seen a woman pass?
- Charon: No, I have not.
No woman passed.
- Man: Did the voice speak of me?
- Charon: No.
- Man: Whom then do you await?
- Charon: Not you.
My orders named a woman, whom I wait.
She is called Damaris. Is this your woman?
- Man: Damaris!
When does she come? She must be on her way!
- Charon: She should come soon—wait for her.
- Man: I will wait
For her as long as need be. She will come soon,
She could not face this path alone. While yet
We were on earth, I could not bear her absence;
And we were one, though contrary in faith—
Even though I listened to the preacher Paul
And turned from the old gods whom she held fast,
To follow Christ; still were we as to two sides
Of the one soul: united in our love, united we
In every other thing.....
- Charon: Why will you talk?
(impatiently):
- (Man Never was such a love as ours, never two souls
(heedless): So firmly held together—But then the fever came,
Lion-like raging through a stricken land:
Before a month had blessed our marriage bed
She sickened and she died—
- Charon: Will you leave off!
I do not want to hear your cursed tale!
I have been ferrying the dead for untold years,
And here you come with a long tedious story
That I have heard a thousand times before—

Man (attempts to speak.) Will you be silent!—'Tis a hard life enough
Piloting you across the dismal Styx
Without your tales. Death may be new to you
That you must talk about it, but to me,
Who have heard the tales of all the dead that pass,
It is no thing to talk of—I am tired,
Made sick and tired by all these tales of death.

Man: But surely, with the evervarying nature,
The individual soul, that shines in man,
Each new dead man brings some new tale of death
To you, who guard the way.

Charon: You are all like;
You think your private death more portant than
The deaths that others die. I care not for
The life you had before you left the earth
With all its heat of passion. Love, and hate,
And all those sweet deluding creeds you hold
Will fall from you, and you will be a shade.
This will say, that never came a ghost
To Hades new, that told me aught of death
I did not know before. When once the breath
Has left the leaden body, the short journey
That leads to Charon's ferry is the same—
Here, where, my boat upon the oozy bank,
Love does not last in Hades. 'Tis a shadow
To the love you had on earth. You'll tire of love
Dragging itself out to a certain end
That slowly, surely comes. When you have touched Styx water,
or set a foot in Hades, love will ebb

(Man attempts to speak) And die; so yours will die—No, not again!
If you have not the power to hold your tongue,
Go, seek your woman.

Man: Charon, I will go—
But, if she come, will you call out for me?

Charon: Yes, yes. (Man goes). Now get you gone—O, I am weary
Of these long-chattering passengers of mine,
Who are all the same. They live their little space,
They are tossed about during a short wild day
By winds that never trouble my smooth Styx
Flowing so slowly and decorously.

(Woman enters): And then they plague me with their eager tales—
Are you called Damaris?

Woman: Yes.

Charon: There was a man
Searching for you just now, who said he was
The husband of Damaris.

Woman: But how did he come here?

Charon: The way you all come. I suppose he died.

Woman: But he was living when I left the world!

Charon: He must have died after you did, and then
Have passed you on the way—But here he comes;

(Man enters) I leave you till my rope is mended. Then,
You must be ready to cross Styx with me.

Charon goes over to the boat to splice his rope. The others embrace.

Woman: How are you here. I saw you as I died,
Strong and in health. What evil struck you down?

Man: I could not live alone. When you lay dead,
So cold, so still, I kissed you once—broke through
The weeping friends gathered around your bed.
They thought me mad, but never was I more sane
To know what I must do. I rushed away,
I came to the Tarpeian* rock, I did not wait.
I leapt, without a moment's waiting—

Woman: You killed yourself!
Ah, but you should not—should have stayed to think.
Even the sorest grief must come to end.
Life is too good to cast away so lightly—
But it was kindly of you.

Man: I did not stop to pray.
I leapt to be with you. The thin air sounded
Like a harsh wind around me as I fell;
I saw your face before me—Came a sound
Of chariots and mailed horsemen in my ears
Mixt with the roar of all the hungry lions
The Emperor keeps to eat us Christians up—
And then I woke, and I was walking here
In this gray wood, where the bare weeping trees
All hung with moss and lichen, blight the air
With noisome dew.
*A precipice over which criminals were hurled to their death.

Woman: To be with me—
Poor hope to get fulfilled. But I am glad
That you have done this thing for love of me.
'Twas nobly done. 'Twas brave to face the unknown,
The darkness and the solitary road,
And of your own free will to follow me
Who had no choice but go. I love your kindness!
But you had joined me at the appointed time
If you had not done this. I am afraid for you,
Who stirred within a long predestined plan
Woven of gods—gods that may not forgive,
But wreak strong vengeance on us. We know nothing.
We cannot bribe the Gods. Yet it was nobly done,
And I am glad to see you. Even as I died
And the gray mist of death crept on my eyes
I saw your face the last. I strove to reach you,
To kiss and say farewell. But as I tried,
The mist closed in; I slept. Slept and awoke:
Awake, I turned to hold you in my arms,
To crush my breasts and hide against your bosom,
To hold you thus, and so dispel the dream.

But my arms closed on nothing, I kissed thin air,
 My breast sank in the slime, my arms were empty,
 I saw these evil trees, and knew that I was dead.
 But even in the horror of that knowledge
 I thought of you—I gloried in your living
 Now I was dead.

Man: As much as we loved then
 We still do love. But what will come to us?
 The old man says that love has no place here
 Where is no heaven and no hell. He says;
 When we have crossed this hateful river's stream
 Our love will surely pass, and leave us lifeless,
 Hating not, loving not, passionless and void.

Woman: You never held our love would surely cease
 When Christian faith demanded that you should.
 Do not yield thus. If it was untrue then
 It is still untrue. There shall be some escape,
 And thus we will not end. You have given life
 That love should stand: no priestcraft reckons this
 Which shall have due reward. We will not fail.

Man: Together we will face the evil powers
 And drag from them the right to keep our love
 Or die in the attempt.

Woman: What would this old man know?
 A ferryman, unlearned and rude, knows nought
 Of what his masters shape their ruling by.
 He is an ancient grumbler, discontent
 At his appointed duty. Heed him not:
 But put your arms about me, hold me fast,
 Look deeply in my eyes, into your heart,
 And then discern if you can cease to olve.

Charon: I have finished. Come.

Man: I will cast away all fear.
 No evil comes to us. The old man lied.
 And we will enter this cold foreign place
 Secure in death. Here will I face the unknown
 With you beside who give me cause to face it;
 And I will conquer it for the sake of you,
 And gain new life from death. Let us be brave.
 We pass into the hollow land of Hades
 Strong without fear, and certain in our love.

Charon: It is now time. My rope is mended. Come,
 Give me your fares—an obol each—and quickly.

Woman: Here is my obol. Quickly give him yours,
 And let us go.

Man: I will give him no obol—
 For I have none to give. Charon, I have no fare;
 There was no money in my corpse's mouth;
 No dirge was sung, my flesh no funeral had.
 Let me pass free.

Charon: No, you must pay the fare.

- Woman: No, Charon, let him pass, he died for love.
Surely that deed avails more than a coin.
He died for love of me; yet not for me,
But for the credit and the sake of love,
For love, and so for me. What's an obol to you,
Who get so many of them? O, be generous,
For once forgive the debt, and let him come.
- Woman: He cannot pass unless he pay his fare.
I dare not waive my right. If a bare word
Of this should get to earth, all men would come
Expecting to pass free.
- Man: Charon, have sense.
I have no obol, so I cannot pay you.
You can gain nothing if you leave me here,
And I deserve to go, because I have died
To be beside my wife. And she would miss me,
She would be sad and lonely in the shades
And I not there. So let me pass. Now, Charon,
It is a husband's right to friend his wife.
She is afraid to cross the Styx alone.
- Charon:
(laughing): No, not alone! I shall be in the boat.
You cannot come unless you pay the fare.
Give me my obol.
- Woman: Charon, let him come.
This is a cruel deed. Sure, it is nothing.
You would not punish him for a mistake?
He cannot stay alone. I am afraid,
I cannot go alone. Take him too.
- Charon: No.
- Woman: Take him alone then—Let me stay behind—
Let my obol do for him—Let me be left.
- Man: No, Damaris, no. We do not part like this.
He shall take both. It was not worthy of you
To try to save me at a hateful price.
- Woman: Be kind to us—O, have you got no heart?
Is your heart stone I kiss your feet; I kneel
Begging your kindness.
- Man: Charon, hear me as well;
I will also kneel, a suppliant at your feet
To pour forth tears, and thank you from my heart
If you will let me come. Treatment unfair,
Evil, to be unjust all for an obol—
A paltry coin that does you little good
When you have got it. Listen, Charon, I.
- Charon: I will not hear again the way you died.
Cease from this noise. Why will you gobble at me?
I yield if you will only hold your tongues.
- Woman: Charon, I thank you; from my heart I thank you.
- Man: I knew the right would overcome at last.
- Charon: Don't start again, I beg. If you keep silence
I'll ferry you across. You must be silent.

If this were known, my place were straightway lost,
And a new ferryman would cross the Styx.

Voice: Charon, I spoke of one, and one alone.
Haste with the woman, or return no more.

After a pause, Charon throws a handful of water from the river into the woman's face. She stands absolutely still for a moment, and then, following his command, moves slowly to the boat and disappears.

Charon: I am undone. . . . Into the boat, my lady,
There must be no delay.

Man: You cannot hold me back.
I go with you. Love cannot fail me now,
And least, a love like ours.

Charon: See, it has failed.
(pointing):

Man: No, no, it has not failed. Let me go past.
I cannot stay behind. What can I do?
Alone in this black wood, how shall I cross?
Tell me how I may get an obol for you?—
Leave me not, Damaris! Stay and help me now!
Stay with me for I cannot stay alone!
Do not go from me!

Charon: Lady, we put out now.
(politely): Pray move to the stern of the boat.

Charon turns to the man, speaking coldly and viciously.

Charon: And as for you,
You shall not leave this wood. You must stay here,
Wandering through the mire from tree to withered tree,
Breathing the reasty air with sodden lungs,
Your flesh upon your bones like rotten fruit
Ready to fall and gape about its core,
And your bones burning like thrice-heated iron
Piercing you through.—If you can get an obol
I'll ferry you across. If not, you stay.
Man: Do not go with him. Do not let him take you.
Stay with me, for I cannot stay alone.
I shall die without you.

Charon, paying no attention to the man, has gone to his boat, shoved off, and disappeared. His paddling can be heard for a moment. Then silence.

Man: For Christ's sake, stay.
Help me, sweet Jesus! Jupiter, aid me thou!
Will no god pity me?—

The sound of the boat is heard again, very faintly in the distance.

Man: I did not think that she would leave me thus;
Some unknown power has rent her from my side,
And love has failed me. I am cursed, helpless,
Until I die in it.

He suddenly realizes what he has said and what his position actually is.

Man: God! now I cannot die!
(In extreme
horror):

The End.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL ACTION

By M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI

(Continued from page 37)

Indian language has to comprehend not merely the Vedas, Upanishads, Sutras, the Gita and the many textual commentaries, but to be linked consequentially with the rest of our life, it has to take in the technology of science, its method, its apparatus, its data, and its conclusions. Even to be really Indian, in a representative sense, it has to employ modern phrases where old-world terminology may tend to grate in communal ears. Such words as "Purna Swaraj" "Satyagraha" "Ramraj" "Hartal" "Khadi" have something of a Hindu-ring in their sound-signification. When we seek to draw in our Moslem brothers, to tell them enter the Rama Rajya is inconsequent and illogical language-behaviour. The substitution of their modern synonyms has not this disadvantage. "Complete independence" "non-cooperation" "democratic rule" "general strike" "decentralisation of industry" are expressions understood the world over, and inclusive of the varied communities of our land. The real mischief of the classical words does not lie in raising spiritual and mediaeval associations in the modern mind, nor is the preference to the other set based on mere protest against Indian isolation or stagnation, though to some extent it is also true. Mostly because these old-world Hindu associations, whatever their utility in rousing the religious fervour of the Hindu retard the evolution of a logical language system for the Indian continent whose present-day fibre is not exclusive to any single community. If there is such a thing as the fallacy of words, the use of language suggestive of communal preference unmindful of Moslem, Christian, Jew, Parsi, elements is not the least fallacy.

Next as to Indian spirituality, which affects to be injured by modern

materialism, it may be stated that its brand is not less variegated than the creeds, cults and denominations in any Church. Matter is scientifically proved to be subtler than was ever imagined. The antithesis between matter and spirit never seemed to have detained Upanishadic seers, either. They even sometime give precedence to matter. "Asadvai idmagra asit" (Taittiriya, II, 7). In the beginning was matter only: *asat* being equated to matter. Otherwise both receive equal treatment. *Satcha* Tyatcha abhavat: it became Sat and its opposite (Taittiriya, II, 6). Also "Satyancha anrutancha satyamabhavat" (ibid) the real and the unreal both it became. Thus in the Gita IX, 19, "Being and non-being am I" (*sadasatchaham*) XI, 37, "Being, non-being, That Supreme" (*Sadasat tatparamyat*). Comprehending a higher order, the Eternal is neither Sat nor Asat (Cf. Gita XII, 13, *Nasattannasaduchyate*). The partiality against matter is not the logical incidence of Hindu scriptures. On the other hand texts like "Annam na nindyat, annam na parichakshita, Annam bahu kurvita" (Taithiriya, III, 7, 8, 9) direct that one should not revile the material resources, nor reject them, but should produce in plenty. The treatment of matter by our forefathers does not offend our scientific sense. They never had contempt for food which they knew was vital as Prana, life itself. They never fought materialism on that score, nor persecute them that stood for it.

The real issue is based on the transiency of phenomenal modes which were alluded to as mere Vivarta (illusion) brought on by the ignorance of the real nature of the Absolute. The changing world is the operation of Maya or Prakriti which is the Sakti (power) of the Supreme. The diver-

sity of the things of the world is explained through this illusion, by those who deny reality to physical existence altogether. To them, Brahman is Existence, Intelligence, and Bliss. These are no material modifications or qualifications. To start with a Nirvisesha Chinmatra (unqualified consciousness) entity and to derive diversity therefrom, it logically requires a power to cast an illusion. Thus the Swetaswatara Upanishad (VI, 2) "Tenesitam Karma vivartateha prithvyatejoanilakhani chintyam" speaks of energy (Karma) having brought out the phases of the earth, water, light, air, and the sky (space). Also "Mayantu prakritim vidyat" (ibid, IV, 10) Nature or Prakriti is illusion, Maya. But in the same breath, it is asserted that the concrete things constitute the parts of the Supreme Reality. "Tasya avayava bhutaistu". If they are parts of a Reality, they are real in themselves. We also come across the play of evolution, which proceeds on the basis of this reality. "Pachyansha sarvan parinamayet" (ibid, V, 5). An all-perfect absolute supreme being transforming itself into higher degrees of perfection is an illogical contradiction. Yet the descent of the Absolute into relation with space, time and causality is smoothly worked upon. The synthesis of absolutism and relativity, transcendentalism and immanence, finite concretisation and infinite abstraction is not a solitary instance in a stray text.

The alchemy of illusion and evolution is a composite process. The Brahman, which (Satyam, Gnanam, Anantam) (Taitt. II, 1) is infinite consciousness, desired to grow forth and be many (soakamayata bahusyam prajayayeti, ibid, II, 6), and the process is intriguingly scientific. It generated energy (action) by Tapas, heat (satapo tapyata, ibid). Atman involved itself in space (akasha) "atmana akasassambhutam" which accommodated the air, which in its turn yielded fire. Fire begat waters, and in the waters, earth sprang. On it plant life, feeding on them, animals and lastly man. (ibid II,

1). If Tapas is thermal origination, prodigious quantities of energy locked up within an atom, which is now battered in very high-powered blast-furnaces are released by Akasa, which is the first mode of Atman. Reality dwells in the sun and the stars, as well as in the void interstellar space. It is in the passage of the electron around proton, in neutron and positron, in photon, and is also in between them all, in interatomic space. The 200 inch telescope, and the high-volt electric furnace affect our life very intimately. If the atoms in a few pounds of coal could be broken completely, the energy released would be enough to propel a liner across the Atlantic.

The economic, political, and social implications of this one experiment may transform life on the planet which is now troubled over shortage of resources, warring to get at colonial expansion to remedy want, seeking preference, political power and economic nationalism through bloodshed and aggression. Eliminate want, identity, or unity with the world is soon accomplished. Believe in real identity, want vanishes. Oneness with That (adwaita siddhi) is the acme of emancipation. An ordered group-life logically proceeds on the conviction that we are none other than the rest of the world which is Brahman itself. Do to others as you would do to thyself is no less appealing than doing as would be done by. Mathematically, this identity is demonstrable. We now know that the sun who exerts the gravitational pull on planetary family is a shifting gaseous mass, whose motional centre varies with the position of the burning material, and other movements. Thus any point in space may constitute the sun-centre, wherefrom the direction of the planetary pull proceeds. Given a sufficiently long lease of life, the sun will traverse all points in space, and all points within him may sometime become his centre. Savitru mandala madhyavarti (residing in the sun-centre) is the key position which any point in

space may occupy. That it does not now occupy is due to the accident of time, place and circumstance, and in terms of Eternity and Infinity, these limitations do not hold. Hence, every point in space is Narayana, the sun-centre, the source of material existence, the one conceivable origin and end of terrestrial evolution.

The doctrine, I am Brahma, the only real, all else is illusion, is of extreme service to found human unity. But the possible abstraction from the concrete things of life, for they are said to be mere Vivarta, is an oft-repeated reproach of this branch of Vedanta, though for practical purposes (vyavaharartham) we assume a secondary reality in things physical.

The tendency toward ego-centrism is another problem. The Parinama Vedanta of Ramanuja seeks to meet these objections. His qualified Absolute (Vishnu) is in some fashion a Personality. Ramanuja deduced from the texts relative to transformation into the many from His Amsa, the reality of physical existence, involving modification as an immanent process. He released himself from Vivarta, the obligation to deny reality of the phenomenal world. "Tadatmanam svayamakuruta". So, the Brhma Sutra I, iv, 26, "Atma kritaih parinamat, cha" makes itself by modification, which is self-caused through the process of evolution." Brahman is not merely the efficient cause, but the material cause as well of the universe. Endowed with reality, life assumed a different aspect of social endeavour (prapatti) and individual effort (purussha prayatna). In social practice the doctrine opened up culture to the lowest Panchama (e.g. Tiruppani Alwar) and the position of Harijans at Melkote and other pilgrim centres is a testimony to bold reform. Womanhood was exalted for cultural leadership (Andal). The founding of Mathas and the distribution of food therein and in the temples, alongside of cultural instruction, mark the begin-

ning of collectivised resources and the release of individual cares from the primary wants of life. The emphasis on Seshatva, and non-possessory impulses is the bid for a socialisation which the installation of Thirumangai Alwar among the sainthood indicated unmistakably. May it even mean that the riches within the temples and on the person of God were meant for human user, and collective feeding? Was Tirumangai Alwar anticipating king Ahmed Zogu of Albania who made the churches disgorge? If greed, and abuse returned to these human institutions, and if temples and Maths no longer serve the human purposes for which they had been undoubtedly designed, the fault did not lie on their material foundation. Nor is it enough to call in human nature as explanation. Man is certainly weak, one may readily concede. But to argue that he is also beyond improvement, incapable of betterment under all conditions is desperate philosophy.

Higher forms of integration are evidenced by history, and evolution is a matter of historical necessity. When we know that the social condition has become faulty, we needs reckon with the motive on which the society had been built, even as when a building turns up cracked, we dig into the foundations to discover the weak-spot. We dig up into the past, expose the dry bones of tradition, mysticism, and an unwillingness to take humanity into confidence. The language of our venerable Acharyas was none too clear to retain its impression on the common herd. Their textual commentaries were designed to perpetuate the hold of the Scriptures on the community, however divergent their interpretation. Even Ramanuja who boldly descended into evolution taking the lead from Bodhayana, does not express himself in terms of relativity, time, space, casuality and such other concepts of physical apprehension, but rested his case on the Absolute That which he somehow invested with sex-HE (Vishnu). The safe-

deposit vault of the Hindu temple thus became infested with ghostly apparitions, and men quake in fear lest their savings thrown into sacred-pit may ever be unearthed.

The real cause of the failure of social endeavour in our country is its unscientific background. If without letting people to know the cause-effect relation, something in the nature of a religious prescription is made to give up the possessive instinct, for instance, (Asakta ranibhishangah putra dara grihadishu, Gita, XIII, 10) the mechanism of society will break soon as the spring of such action fails. To keep people ever in bondage through fear of evil in this or in another world, or in the hope of reward in after-life, have been too long tried as social postulates to retain our confidence. Kapila mentions Dakshina Bandha (bondage through presents for spiritual benefit) alongside of natural, and evolutionary or historical bondages (Prakriti and Vikara Bandhas). It only shows how difficult it is for man to get round superstitious faiths. To perpetuate these is to lead humanity to hopeless perversion. The true basis of sociology ought to be scientific truth, however fragmentary, relative it may be. For when the fictions of religion are discovered to be fictions, reaction far worse than the fervour of faith will set in, and the priest and the Pujari will one day be caught eating up not merely the offerings, but even the most sacred symbols of Godhead itself. The social success that Vaishnava philosophy achieved is in the material background. Spirituality which professed to be Absolute, unconditioned by circumstance, goes the way of all other forms thereof under differing conditions and at diverse times. We who neglect history may do so at our own risk. Even then, Vaishnava Siddhi did not claim unity with the Absolute. The individual inherits all the bliss and honours which are predicable to God (Bhogamatra samyalingachcha, Brahma Sutras, IV, iv, 21) there is unity of essence or substance, yet a difference of

Personality is indicated, comparable to Christian salvation.

Shankara who preached identity with Brahman (adwaita) was content with a negative definition thereof "Neti, Neti" (not this, nor this) and even Ramanuja with his qualified Purushottama (visistaadwaita) was not unmindful of the philosophic contradiction of seeking to define the Absolute. He too had to admit that He was beyond definition, and speech, despite benevolent attributes (kalyana gunas) conceive of Him. "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (Cf. Wittgenstein, quoted in *Tongues of Men*, p.123). The Bhagavata philosophy (Madhvacharya) went further to dissociate humanity from divinity in a marked dualism, a process not dialectically distant from the relation of Allah with the world according to Islam.

The comparative study outlined thus reveals the parallellism in the working of human thought, and may help to foster understanding between the apparent diversities of faith. "Sooner or later, it is inevitable that the battery of the comparative method should breach the venerable walls mantled over with the ivy and mosses and wild flowers of a thousand tender and sacred associations" (J. G. Fraser, the *Golden Bough*, preface to 2nd Edition) "The marvellous tales in the Canonical gospels have been derived from heathen legends" (Vivian Phelps in 'Concerning Progressive Revelation,' p. 33). The plan of evolution—a plan of torture and murder—cannot be possibly attributed to the God of Love, and the infinitely slow process called progress deprived man for countless ages of a knowledge of truth leading inevitably therefore to deplorable absurdities, hideous cruelties and quite avoidable and unnecessary misery of every kind. The suffering inherent in the march of evolution is sufficient to discredit the foundation of absolute wisdom and infinite love on which traditional faith here and elsewhere rested. If we start with Omnipotence, the idea of progress, which

history proves to be a slow painful process, is an inherent contradiction.

I had occasion to deal with the sequence of philosophical thought in the west on which Hindu Vedanta had had marked influence (The Dynamics of Indian Philosophy, Indian Phil. Congress, Delhi, Dec. 1936). As Hegel reflected Indian thought on the Idealist basis, it was pointed out that his dialectical method of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis was applied by Karl Marx to the evolution of the industrial society on the economic front. Marxism is thus the translation of Hegelian language in terms of social order. The physical language is the basic language of all science, and the philosophy of a science is the syntactical analysis of the language of that science. (Tongues of Men, p. 121). The philosophy of the historical and social sciences is therefore the syntactical analysis of the languages of history and sociology. Socialism is thus the stage resulting from the dialectical process, under historical necessity, while we may not ignore the language of Indian Metaphysical exercise with all its ramifications (for it is as even our life-blood), we cannot shut ourselves from the facts of scientific organisation which humanity has developed in our time.

Each age has had its politics, middle ages included. But history presents an ever-varying sequence of facts and conditions. The middle ages believed in eternal verities, absolutes, certitudes about Truth, Ahimsa, mercy and the rule of an immutable moral law, things which our knowledge has retired into relativity. As we are concerned with the social emancipation of the scientific age, we cannot release ourselves from the knowledge of the world-conditions we now possess. There is no mystical escape from it. Social forces are no exception to the reign of natural law, scientific determination. Our thought and language is conditioned by our economic situation. Our philosophy de-

(Continued on page 65)

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CHAMPION OF INDIAN WIDOWS

Prof. Karve Celebrates His 81st Birthday.

By Dr. R. P. Paranjpye.

(Reproduced from the "Times of India")

Among the most earnest and ceaseless workers in the cause of Social Reform in India at the present day, Mr. Dhando Keshav Karve, who completed his 80 years on Sunday, stands pre-eminent. The occasion is being celebrated in Poona, Bombay and other centres and attempts will doubtless be made to devise steps for the furthering of the objects to which he has dedicated his whole life. Although his name is familiar all over India as a social and educational worker he does not figure in the press as frequently or as prominently as if he were a politician.

Professor Karve, who is the son of my father's eldest sister, comes from a family which three or four generations before had played a prominent part in the regime of the Peshawas at Poona, but had been reduced to indigence after the disappearance of the Mahratta power in Poona. His father had little ancestral property left to him and was for many years a clerk to one of the landowners in his village of Murud in the Ratnagiri district, on a salary of something like Rs. 25 per annum.

Self-Educated

Almost entirely by his own efforts the son educated himself and passed his B.A. examination from the Elphinstone College, Bombay, in 1884, at the age of 27. He then settled in Bombay as a teacher in private schools and as a private coach in Mathematics and Marathi. At the Elphinstone College, he was the class fellow of the late Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, as they were both studying Mathematics for their B.A. examination. He was an exceedingly efficient teacher and was in great demand. He often left his lodgings before sunrise and returned long after sunset,

snatching his food in some shops in a few spare minutes. Soon after he was thus settled fairly comfortably in Bombay, he brought to stay with him for education three boys, who were related to him. Among these was myself, although three years previously he had taken full charge of me and put me to school, first at Murad and then at Dapoli with one of his friends. My first lesson in the English alphabet was given by him in May, 1885. I stayed with him in his own house from January, 1888, till I passed my B.Sc. in December 1894. I may thus claim to be his first intellectual child.

In 1881, he unexpectedly received a letter from Gokhale offering him the Professorship of Mathematics at the Fergusson College which had fallen vacant owing to the resignation of Tilak, who till then used to teach that subject. Gokhale knew the earnestness and capability of Mr. Karve, though he was then quite unknown to any but his immediate friends and villagers. I had just then passed my Matriculation examination and went to Poona with him. From the pecuniary point of view this change meant a great sacrifice as he used to earn over Rs. 200 in Bombay, while at Poona his salary would be only Rs. 75 per mensem.

Just about this time his first wife, whom we all of us boys in the house loved as our second mother, died. He soon made his mark as a College Professor, and, while there was nothing brilliant about his teaching, he was exceedingly methodical and steady and very lucid in his work. This made him a successful teacher and he decided to cast in his lot with the Life Members

of the Deccan Education Society, which meant working in the College or in the associated schools for a period of at least twenty years on a salary of Rs. 75 per mensem. Till this time Mr. Karve was not known to hold any reformist views except by his most intimate friends. But his colleagues at Poona were generally social reformers, and one of them, Agarkar, was their recognised leader. Mr. Karve decided to marry a widow, if he married again at all, and in 1893 he married his present wife, who has been helping him also in various activities.

Widow Remarriage

From that time, while he continued to do his College work most efficiently and to the full satisfaction of his pupils and colleagues, he decided to devote himself to the uplift of women. He immediately started, with the encouragement of Ranade, Agarkar, and others, the Society for the Promotion of Widow Remarriage which at that time produced among the generality of the people far greater feelings of resentment than it does now. He travelled widely advocating the cause of widow marriage and several such marriages were brought about with his help and encouragement.

He soon found, however, that marriage was not the complete solution of the problem of Indian widows. He saw that to improve their position they must first of all be educated, so as to be able to earn their livelihood, if necessary, and be fit to play their part in society if they remarried. With this object in view he started the Hindu Widows' Home. A short time afterwards a friend offered him a few acres of land at Hingne Budruk, about four miles from Poona, and he transferred his home there. He built a small shed on this plot of land and he walked every day to and from the Home, which was then in a very lonely place with no habitations within a mile. The Home, however, soon became known and the numbers grew so large that his own

means were not enough to maintain it.

Collecting Funds

He had, therefore, to travel about the country during his spare time to collect funds. Gradually within a few years the Home had grown so much that a separate school, both primary and secondary, was started there for the education of the inmates. The confidence of the people in Mr. Karve was such that he received many requests for taking in unmarried girls also in the Home, and its scope was therefore, soon extended to include these, though most of them on a paying basis. He gradually collected round him some other Life Members, both men and women, who decided to devote themselves to the cause of education of women on a basis of sacrifice. The Home has turned out a large number of educated widows as well as girls, who have either married and settled in life or are doing useful work as teachers, etc. Later, a Training College for primary teachers was also started and Hingne at present is a busy hive of educational work with a population of something like 400 pupils, teachers and dependants.

In 1915, by which time he had completed his term of 20 years in the Deccan Educational Society and had retired on pension, he happened to see the prospectus of a Women's University in Japan, which was sent to him by some unknown correspondent. He was immediately attracted to this idea and directly set to work to bring a similar institution into existence in our country. In 1915 he was elected President of the Indian Social Reform Conference which then used to be held in conjunction with the annual session of the Indian National Congress and in his Presidential address first gave public expression to this idea. Not content with merely making a paper scheme he immediately set about working it out in practice. As usual he started with very small beginnings. A friend offered him

a few thousand rupees for beginning the work, and he collected some friends and made out a constitution for this Indian Women's University, the main principles of which were higher education through Indian languages and the arrangements of courses of study to suit the special needs of women. The University which is modelled on the basis of an affiliating University held its first examination in 1917. Now the University holds examinations up to the degree stage in Indian Languages, English being a compulsory subject for all.

A Windfall

Two or three years afterwards, a wellknown millowner of Bombay, Sir Vitthal Das Damodardas Thackersey, hearing of Mr. Karve's devoted work, discussed his ideas with him and offered to give to the University an endowment of 15 lakhs of rupees in 3½ per cent. Government Paper under certain conditions. This was a windfall which Mr. Karve, whose ideas about funds were very modest indeed, had never entertained even in his wildest dreams. This endowment made the University a practical success. A few years after

Sir Vitthal Das's death, however, some difficulties arose with his trustees and the Women's University, which was Mr. Karve's crowning work, seemed to be in very great difficulty, as the income from this endowment stopped for two or three years. The difficulty has now been settled and the University may now be said to be firmly planted on its career.

To-day, entering on his 81st year, Mr. Karve's physical energy is still boundless. One would not think that his small, thin, unimpressive figure was capable of such work. He still can easily walk 10 or 15 miles a day and does nearly every day. When he was 72, he went abroad and travelled over England and various parts of Europe, South Africa, America, China, Japan, the Philippines, Malay Peninsula, and other parts of the world to expound his mission to Indians settled abroad and to others. He is still hale and hearty, and his enthusiasm is more appropriate to a young college boy than a venerable octogenarian. In habits he is simple almost to a fault, in manners he is the reverse of dictatorial, but his sincerity and honesty of purpose make an irresistible appeal to all.

MEDICAL YOUTH ON PROHIBITION

America went dry and America went so wet underground that I was almost afraid, when a very deep well was being sunk in my village home, that we would be getting alcoholic currents in the well. But my village had to go completely dry before getting equally wet. Prohibition is all right. No body can have anything to say against it ethically; still we cannot be and should not be carried away with idealistic sentiments. It is no use to become too obstinate and refuse to learn from other's experience. It is no use to say that India is different from America or America is different from India. HUMAN beings all over the

world, in spite of the differences in their lives, thoughts and opportunities are identical in their so called WEAKNESSES.

Prohibition is all right, but has any of these prohibitionists thought for a moment, why people drink? Why, in spite of definite commands of every religion, people have gone on drinking through ages? Is any of these prohibitionists in a position to give one moment of CAREFREE pleasure to some miserable wretch, whom he deprives of his drink? If no, then he has no right to the pleasure he snatches from the feeling of having done something good,

of having saved someone from drink. It is no use to save a person from drink and let him die of cares and worries and miseries. It is not playing the game to fatten a calf just to kill it (of course from the calf's point of view). But I would not talk in this strain lest somebody suspect me of getting inspiration from Russia, even though what I am talking is pure commonsense. But it is a fact that people have gone on drinking in spite of God and Religion, Russia or no Russia. And when any one dreams of putting an end to this with a stroke of the pen or a cup of tea, it sounds ridiculous. The idea! Replacing alcoholism with a sweet drink! It seems idealistic prohibitionists are utterly ignorant about what is alcoholism. I wish these prohibitionists had learnt something about alcoholism. The craving for alcohol, might be satisfied to some extent with a bitter drink, but never with a sweet one. It might be on the contrary enhanced.

The ignorance of the prohibitionists is enormous about what is wine or 'Daru'. If you tell them that what the most orthodox of Hindus drink as a habit regularly after meals, is not a medicinal preparation prescribed by Asvinikumar (God of Medicine) himself, but pure and simple wine, they would not believe you. Still here we would compare the p.c. of Alcohol in this drink called "Drakshasav" with some of the common alcoholic drinks:

Beer—14% to 5%
Porter—5% to 6%
Ale—6%
Claret—7%
Burgandy—13%
Sherry—16%
Drakshasav—11% to 12%
Toddy—9% to 11%

During 1930-33, wine-shops picketing was very successful, because shrewd people had found a bottle of Drakshasav as intoxicating as any that can be had from a wine-shop. Nay, at times Drakshasav was found to be far better, because these days of Chemical Analysis and Scientific methods of preparing

Ayurvedic drugs, some manufacturers do not wait for the completion of the slow and clumsy sugar fermentation in the Ayurvedic way. It is quicker and cheaper to add up the required p.c. of Alcohol; then the sugar might go on fermenting. What does it matter if there be five or six p.c. of extra alcohol? Drakshasav tastes all the better. And then there are all those allopathic medicinal patented tonics going under different names, containing almost 50 % alcohol. These might not be intoxicating in medicinal doses but they are intoxicating enough, and in no other way harmful, in larger doses.

Now we would come to the effects of prohibition. One old man of eighty in Salem District killed himself because it was not possible for him to get a drink. India being a country of Masochists, more might follow his example but healthier and stronger people might not do so. They might just fight for a glass of wine. At present those who happen to be in a dry district just stroll up to a wetter one. But when these wet districts are abolished—the country has got to go wet underground. A wave of crime and bootlegging is sure to follow, nothing can stop it: The craving for alcohol is equally strong the world over, whether in America or India.

I am not unnecessarily pessimistic. I have seen prohibition working in my native village—Chavnad in Kathiawar. When during 1920-1930, waves of pious and purifying politics were spreading all over India from Ahmedabad, our village heads who had never known what colour the wine can be, went prohibitionists. The village Kalal (Proprietor of the wine shop) afraid of Social boycott, had to clear out bag and baggage. The customers coming to this Kalal were mainly outsiders—petty Darbars, Kathis from surrounding places. The Kalal kept his shop in our village just to get protection from Gaekwar State against the petty Darbars surrounding our village. Very few from the village folks were given to drinking—perhaps the danger of being

found out being an indirect check. With the closing down of the wine shop, those who were addicted to drinking started riding up to the adjoining towns. For the younger blood, the difficulty of obtaining wine proved to be an added attraction and adventurous at that, with the result that after some fifteen years of so-called prohibition there are to-day ten times more people drinking and these include not only low caste people, but high class Brahmins and Banias also.

My aim in writing is to show to the wise prohibitionists the utter futility of meddling in things they know nothing about. If they want to work sincerely for prohibition, I would advise them to (1) investigate the causes why people drink and to remove these causes: It is not that people drink just because a pub or a bar is nearby. I would advise them (2) to get familiar with the Scientific methods of fighting the cravings of alcoholism. (Prohibition would go a long way if some saint or prohibitionist, to whom prohibition may be more precious than even the National Independence, would get himself addicted to drinking and then give up the habit completely, say, after a period of one month.)

No one would think from this article that I am advocating drinking; but I am definitely against enforced prohibition just as I am against enforced spinning. Enforced prohibition would be the death-knell of prohibition. It is just like putting the cart in front of the bullock and giving the bullock an opportunity to break the cart to pieces with his horns. I am not one who goes out looking for trouble with flying flags and Kunkum mark on the forehead, but still, any day, I, a Prashnora Nagar by birth, who cannot even touch a drop of water even at the highest of Brahmins, am resolved to perform—not Satyagraha, lest somebody call it Duragraha—but 'Daru-agrah'. THIS is a challenge and the PROOF of my good-faith and anxiety about the setback the

cause of prohibition might suffer due to premature enforcement by unscientific methods.

SHANTI PRASAD.
(Grand Medical College).

REVIEWS.

Essays in Freethinking, (Fourth Series) by Chapman Cohen. The Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. (2s. 6d.)

This is the fourth of a series of volumes containing articles which have already appeared in the author's weekly journal the "Freethinker". We need not say that they are readable, since we have reproduced some of them in "Reason". Mr. Cohen is one of the most forceful writers in English, and though a good many of these articles concern Christianity, they will be read with interest even by the non-Christian reader, because religions resemble one another so much in spite of their differences and the fanaticism that they inspire, that an attack on one religion is very much like an attack on another, because they are inspired by the same spirit of mysticism and irrationalism which characterises a certain type of mind. Mr. Cohen is a master of dialectic and his articles make delightful reading. We cordially recommend this book to our readers.

R. D. KARVE.

Shanghai, The Paradise of Adventurers, by G. E. Miller (pseudonym), Diplomat, Orsay Publishing House, 35 West 32nd Street, New York.

Nobody who wishes to know what has really been happening in Japan and China during the last few years can afford to ignore this book. It reveals things about the behaviour of foreigners in China which should make all the so-called civilised nations of Europe and America ashamed of themselves. The only wonder is how such a book, dealing truthfully with evi-

dence which is sufficient to damn so many important people, including the Consuls of several important Powers, the Lytton Commission, and the League of Nations which sent it to China, was allowed to see the light of day. It describes vividly the so-called extra-territorial rights of several foreign countries in Shanghai and the extraordinary advantages enjoyed by foreigners there on this account. It tells how Shanghai is the best land for the adventurer who intends to live by his wits at the expense of other people, how he can get free meals and anything else he likes, because if he is prosecuted, he can only be tried by a magistrate of his own nationality, who naturally acquits him! It describes not only how Consuls are usually engaged in enjoying themselves and making money by underhand ways, but also how the Lytton Commission did the same, wasting time in being sumptuously treated by the Japanese in Japan instead of hastening to see for themselves what was happening in China; how the so-called truthful reports sent to the League of Nations by that Commission or by others were always reports manufactured by the Japanese, who naturally pretended that everything was above-board. Very few people would imagine that the Japanese would bolw up their own train and lay the blame on the Chinese as an excuse for attacking them, but apparently that is what actually happened.

Of special interest to rationalists is the chapter on "Mixing Business with Religion", especially as the writer is by no means against missionaries as such. A Buddhist priest tells him that "China has advanced, not because of the missionaries, but in spite of them. Their influence has been of a retrogressive nature. We have progressed and advanced for the same reason that the whole world has progressed and advanced, because new scientific discoveries are gradually displacing the old order of things, because we, like all other nations, are readjusting ourselves

to the new age. The part played by the missionaries in China's movement forward is negative rather than positive; it is detrimental rather than helpful, since primarily, they explain their presence here on the ground that we are uncivilized barbarians." Almost the same answer might be made to the British claim that they have civilized India. "How can they achieve anything great?" continues the Bonze, "They fight among themselves all the time; they hate one another....The Catholics run down the Protestants and vice versa". To a question whether the Protestants are more successful than others, he replies, "Quantity production, like Ford automobiles....The American Community Church in Shanghai turns out an average of one thousand such converts a year, who could not tell you the difference between Christ and Christopher Columbus."

One finds missionaries manufacturing imitations of French perfumes with names like "Nuit d'Amour", "Extasie", "Divin Baiser" "Coeur en flamme".... and Spanish fathers engaged in all sorts of financial operations, banking, financing, mortgage loans, opium, arms and munitions, money changing, theatrical promotions..... "they have a hand in everything". "Would you believe that these servants of the Lord, who are in Shanghai to disseminate the doctrines of the Great Master and preach the Gospel of Christ whose life they have vowed to imitate, loan money on warehouse goods at the interest rate of 30 to 90%; that on sums advanced they have foreclosed in hundreds of cases, acquiring that way enormous amounts of merchandise?"

This is a fairly large volume, 304 pages demi-octavo, but it grips you from beginning to end.

R. D. KARVE.

Also Received:

Twelve Religions and Modern Life by Har Dayal, Modern Culture Institute, Edgware, England. 350 pp. 2s. 6d. net.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, The Reason.

Sir,—In January last I had accompanied certain friends who visited the Durga of Kamarally Durvesh which is at a distance of about 12 miles from Poona on the Poona-Mahableshwar Road. We were anxious to verify the phenomenon which a great many people look upon as a miracle. The phenomenon is like this. In the compound of the Durga which is not a very big area, I believe it may be about 200 sq. yds, contains some trees and in the middle of it is the tomb. There are three or four stones one of which is about 3 cubic feet and which must be about six to eight maunds. We had heard the account that this stone can be lifted by only eleven persons standing around it and applying the pressure of one finger each below the bottom edge of the stone, but this is possible only when while lifting, the persons keep on shouting the name of the Pir in one breath. The stone falls down as soon as one or all of the party stop calling his name. The stone cannot be lifted from the ground if the name of the Pir is not called out by the party. This phenomenon occurs in any part of the compound. Since there is a large amount of belief that this is a miracle, no one has yet tried this lifting up outside the compound of the Durga. Again, if there is a single lady among the required quota of eleven people, the phenomenon does not occur even if the name of the Pir is called forth.

Could any of your readers explain the cause of this phenomenon which is considered as a miracle by both the Muslims and Hindus and even by others who have occasion to witness the same or experiment the same?

I enclose herewith a couple of photographs taken on the occasion.

Yours truly,
A. MOLEDINA.

(Of course no photograph can prove the above statement. The effect may be merely psychological. Can any of our readers explain the phenomenon, if there is one?—Ed.)

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF FREETHINKERS

The provisional programme of the Congress has been received. It is to be held in London September 9—13.

Chairman of the Organizing Committee is Mr. Chapman Cohen. President of Honour, Edouard Herriot, **Maire de Lyon President de la Chambre des Deputes**. Among the many distinguished persons on the Committee of Honour are Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells, Joseph McCabe, Sir Arthur Keith, Prof. H. Levy, Prof. H. J. Laski and others. Subjects for discussion are "Science and the Churches", "Youth, the Schools and Freethought", "The Reality of a Secular Ethic", "The Struggle for Peace and Freedom" and Reports on the situation of Freethought in different countries.

(Continued from page 58)

pends upon the economic strata from which we are drawn. Insufficient physical necessities augment strife. The first care should therefore be to see that every one comes up to a minimum standard of food, clothing and housing. Not only justice, but policy also requires the minimum. How may a state expect willing co-operation from members who do not benefit by it to the extent of food, clothing and housing? They are a source of weakness in many ways. Their physical condition makes them vulnerable to disease. Their discontent is the seed of social strife. The evil is increased by the paradoxical fact that they are the most prolific. Neither is ambition the product of insufficient physical necessities. A saner economic order is the indication made by concrete example in our day, founded upon the failure of indeterminate mysticism to which India has played too long already.

REASON

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SECRETRIAL COMMENTS

England witnessed a very pious
outburst of "Christian Truth" when the
upholders of "Christian freedom" tried
to prevent the holding of the Interna-
tional Congress of World Freethinkers,
and "lying for the Glory of the Lord"
went on apace until Mr. Chapman
Cohen, chairman of the organizing
committee in a few scathing articles
effectively checked and exposed the
religious humbug. But none of the
religious papers had the courtesy to
apologise for the deliberate lies they
had published.

The Christian Church and all its
different brands, as usual, "saw red"
and like the bull were enraged. But
this time they definitely failed to find
the "red rag".

The church and press combined in
a confederacy and are unanimous for
police and parliamentary action. They
alleged it to be a red menace ordered
from Moscow and backed with a con-
tribution of 1,50,000 roubles.

Religious fanaticism still holds
sway in England, but it appears that
its methods have degenerated.

For the first time freethinkers of
India will be represented at the Inter-
national Congress and there will be an
Indian group. One of the delegates will
be Dr. Har Dayal.

"The truth is on the march and
nothing will stop it." Rationalists of
Australia are forging ahead. The New
Zealand Truth Seeker has completed
its eleventh year of publication, and
we are pleased to note that it has been
increased in size and improved in its
get up. We wish them success.

On the 26th of January 1938 Aus-
tralia celebrated the 150th Anniversary
of British rule in that country. On that
day representatives of the Aborigines
the natives of that country waited on
the Prime Minister of the Common-
wealth asking for protection from three
enemies of Progress—The Aborigines
Protection Board, The Liquor Trade and
White missionaries that cause dissen-
sion among the Aborigines.

That makes us think of things
nearer home.

America's famous lawyer Clarence
Darrow died at his home in Chicago,
March 13th, at the age of 80. He was
an avowed atheist. Throughout his
life he championed unpopular causes,
and was known internationally as a
criminal lawyer.

The Rationalist Contact Club supplies one of the most pressing needs of local rationalists. It is not only a library and rendezvous, but also provides relaxation in the way of indoor games. Freethought journals from all over the world are available and help to keep one in touch with the progress of the Freethought movement round the world.

The monthly subscription has now been reduced to one rupee and can be further reduced if more join. Some members pay one-eight and even two rupees a month which is a great help.

Officially the R.C.C. is a separate body and is only affiliated to the R.A.I. which is not financially responsible for it. But in fact the Club is a part of the Association.

Being centrally situated it serves as an office of the R.A.I. saving a lot of time and trouble of the Executive Committee.

We request our local members to join the club which will also be a help to the Association.

The secretaries of the R.A.I. will be found at the club on Tuesdays and Fridays from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

We thank Mr. D. R. D. Wadia for presenting 35 books to the library. A list of the books in the R.A.I. library is in preparation.

We gratefully acknowledge the following membership renewals:—

J. S. Warden, Bombay; R. K. Javeri, Calcutta; Mrs. D. R. D. Wadia, Bombay; Commander N. Wood-Smith, Ootacamund; Ramdas Khimji, Bombay; J. F. Vapiwala, Ahmedabad; Dr. C. R. Athavle, Bombay; J. N. Patuck, Bombay; Charu Chander Dass, Calcutta; Dr. A. J. Kohiyar, Bombay; Dr. J. J. Asana, Ahmedabad; Dr. V. R. Shirodkar, Bombay; Dr. R. V. Sanzgiri, Bombay; Sam M. Neksautkhan, Surat; I. Chamboorwala, Hyderabad; Joseph S. Ward, Bombay; V. V. Sohoni, Karachi;

Dr. H. Ghosh, Calcutta; C. S. Dinshaw, Bombay; T. H. Modi, Bombay; S. R. Patel, Bombay; Dr. J. D. Kapadia, Bombay; Mrs. P. J. Brenden-Brady, Bombay; Lt. B. H. N. Bunshah, Bombay; A. R. Dalal, Ahmedabad; C. Deb. Bannerji, Calcutta; Dr. R. V. Paranjpye, Lucknow; Lt.-Col. S. Sokhey, Bombay; A. Raptokos, Bombay; S. Halder, Namkum; R. K. Makan Wahla, Bombay; Dr. A. C. Ukil, Calcutta; B. D. Solomon, Bombay; Dr. K. G. Nerurkar, Nagpur; R. R. Shresta, Lucknow; S. R. Subramanyam, Tirupur; Dr. Chari, Bombay; Dr. Geo. Coelho, Bombay; A. H. Irani, Bombay.

OBITUARY

F. GOULD
(1885—1938)

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Frederick James Gould, well known humanist and freethinker of England, which occurred on April 6, 1938, at the age of 82.

Mr. Gould devoted his whole life to the cause of humanitarianism education, and world unity and peace.

He visited India in 1913 and toured eight Bombay Presidency cities by arrangement of the Bombay Government, addressing Hindu, Muslim and Parsee youths.

In connection with his various interests, Mr. Gould published a large number of books and pamphlets, mostly intended for young readers. His outstanding work was **'History the Teacher'**, published in 1921, in which he envisaged a system of history teaching that should be free from national bias.

Most of our readers will remember that he often contributed articles to "Reason" since the start of the journal.

Mr. Gould is survived by a widow and one daughter to whom we offer our sympathies.

His cremation took place on April 11, 1938. No mourning and no flowers, by his request.

To think everything, to say everything,
to dare everything, are the noblest
qualities of the human mind.

—Chapman Cohen.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND
THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTA-
LITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY. *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

New Series.

JULY-AUGUST 1938.

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RELIGIONS GALORE !

BY

R. D. KARVE

Dr. Har Dayal has recently published a book entitled "Twelve Religions and Modern Life" (Modern Culture Institute, Edgware, Middlesex, England, price Sh.2/6 net), in which he takes a review of twelve important religions: Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sufism, Positivism and notes very briefly their objectionable features, but expounds their merits at some length "for the benefit of Humanists and others." It may be mentioned that Shinto is of Japanese origin, the next two are Chinese, the next three Indian. The last two are perhaps not so well-known. Dr. Har Dayal says, "Sufism is the younger cousin of Islam. . . . Sufism teaches us to scorn external rites and ceremonies", . . . and it encourages the

study of all religions, in order to throw away the shell and take the kernel of each, as the author has tried to do in this book. The last in the list, Positivism, was founded by the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857), and is more a philosophical system than a religion. "Positivism teaches us to love science" and "condemns metaphysics as fruitless and futile". Comte says, "The true positive spirit consists in substituting the study of the invariable laws of phenomena for that of their so-called Causes." He insists on the Unity of Humanity, irrespective of race and creed.

Dr. Har Dayal does not take note of Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritists, nor of the latest of these crazes, known as "Baha'ism", whose apostles are at present touring the world in search of followers

and who pretend that it is the greatest of all religions. However, this is a characteristic of all religions and need not detain us. It was apparently founded by one Baha'u'llah, who propounded his doctrines about sixty years ago, so that Baha'ism can claim at least to be the newest religion. There is hardly anything objectionable in his doctrines: the oneness of mankind, independent investigation of truth, equality between men and women, universal peace, universal education, universal language, an international tribunal. But so many silly stories have grown up around him that his miracles bid fair to eclipse those of any other religion. The story goes, for instance, that once, when his enemies had bound him down with ropes and ordered 300 soldiers to fire on him, the bullets only cut the ropes which tied him and so freed him instead of killing him. These stupid stories are seriously given out from various platforms, and readers will remember a recent performance of this kind in which Mrs. Fouzdar, the local exponent of Baha'ism, took part jointly with an imported American lady journalist. And in spite of this, they say that Baha'ism insists on religion agreeing with science! But after all, what is a religion without miracles?

Dr. Har Dayal is a mystic who calls himself a rationalist. He will probably protest against the term "mystic", but we cannot help that. It will be extremely easy to prove it if we consider the philosophy of "Dayalism" which he expounds at the end of the book. Dr. Har Dayal is in dire need of a course in "semantics", a somewhat new science which deals with the meaning of words, and which would prevent people using meaningless words like "eternal", "sublime", "absolute truth" and the like, without which no religion can get on.

The trouble with all mystics is that they find it impossible to get rid of ancient superstitions, however much they may wish to do so. One of the superstitions most difficult to kill is the sex obsession which besets most religious people.

There are two phases of it. One is to consider sex dirty and advise entire abstinence from intercourse except perhaps for procreation, as Gandhi does, or to call it sacred and draw similar conclusions from that. This is a religious kink, which even so-called rationalists find it difficult to get rid of. Food and sex satisfaction are the two most important needs of all higher animals. The idea of dirtiness has attached itself to sex on account of the proximity of sex and excretory organs. It is possible to argue that food is dirty, because people who eat with their fingers feel obliged to wash their hands afterwards. This dirty idea of sex is simply ancient superstition. But Dr. Har Dayal is not able to get rid of it, any more than Mr. Gandhi. Commenting on the equality of man and woman advocated by Positivism, he says (page 235), "Humanism also utters a word of warning. Freedom for woman should not mean freedom to make a fool of herself". Now freedom does not mean anything if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes. If other people are to tell you what to do, what is right and what is wrong, there is no freedom. Later on, he adds: "Woman should be Man's mentor and monitor, not his frivolous boon-companion and fellow-roysterer." This is certainly not equality. This implies that woman is superior to man. "The modern Woman should also guard the sexual purity of the old-fashioned wife. . . .". So the freedom advocated is only a name. Then he speaks of the "double standard" of morality, saying that it "must be abolished; it must not be extended to women too." This does not really make any sense, but one can see what he means. He thinks that men should be judged as women are judged now, meaning that he advocates shackles for men, instead of freedom for women. "Sex purity" is a perfectly ridiculous superstition. That there is anything impure in having intercourse with more than one individual of the opposite sex, is a position which can hardly be based on scientific facts and logical reasoning. That

theory has been enforced on women almost everywhere, but where is the sense of forcing it on men instead of emancipating women from a senseless idea? "As we leave the primeval slime behind, Sex becomes more of a soul-impulse and less of a physical appetite." This is where semantics would be eminently useful. Sex is an essentially physical appetite, whatever poetry and dreams may accompany it. "The modern Women must teach and train us Men to love purity and chastity; she should not sink to the level of the sensual, primitive Male." Where then is the equality of man and woman? What is this chastity but a remnant of the idea that a woman is the property of some man? How does this differ from the Hindu theory that woman belongs either to the father, or husband or son or brother as the case may be? How is she free if she cannot even dispose of her body as she pleases? Why are a few square-inches of the body given so much importance in the general scheme of things? Individuals differ so much in respect of sex as in everything else, that to lay down rules in this matter is an unwarrantable interference with personal liberty. There was some reason for such rules when birth control and the prevention of venereal diseases were unknown. Those reasons do not exist any longer and all ideas of morality based on that ignorance need to be revised.

"The Modern Woman must teach and train us Men to love Purity and Chastity" (page 237). This is a misuse of words. These words as applied to Sex have not the remotest connection with their ordinary meaning. To consider that the body is polluted by its sexual function being carried out is an idea worthy of savages, not of rationalists. This exceptional importance given to sex simply shows an obsession whose root causes may be found by psychoanalysis. Even the most fundamental function of eating is not considered so important and no rules are laid down for that. It may perhaps be argued that sex concerns future generations and is therefore more

important, but this argument loses its value in these days when conception is not a necessary consequence of sex intercourse. Dr. Har Dayal's attitude is surely not scientific, though he claims in his philosophy (page 245) that "We are neither spiritualists nor materialists, but simply scientists".

And there is hardly anything scientific in his other tenets. He claims that the Universe manifests two principles, Good and Evil, and any scientist who cares for the meaning of the words he uses, will think twice before accepting the statement that the Principle of Good "triumphs slowly but surely in biological evolution and in human civilization". There is absolutely no scientific evidence to this effect. Dr. Har Dayal rejects the doctrine of a transcendental personal extra-cosmic "God" (page 245) and still speaks of the Divine Principle of Good (page 246).

Another blunder that he commits is in saying "We honour and revere all the great teachers of the past, e.g. Zoroaster, Moses." When it is known that a great part of their teachings was wrong (as the author himself admits) why then should "we use suitable selections from their writings for our moral progress" (page 248) ? Is it because Dr. Har Dayal finds it impossible to express good ideas in his own words and must borrow from these so-called great Teachers with a capital T? In that case he may approach contemporary writers who have a greater mastery of the language. When we condemn some of the things these great Teachers have taught, why this pretence of sitting at their feet? We do not acknowledge their authority, since we do not accept all that they say, and it is hypocrisy to pretend that we revere them. In fact, one of the fundamental mistakes in the progress of Human thought was to attach too much importance to individual thinkers. But for this mistake, there would have been no religions, and everybody would have been free to ponder over different theories of morality without

revering them, as in the case of scientific theories.

Dr. Har Dayal does not even seem to have understood that the sex function has a Health value. It seems he trains some Apostles to spread his Gospel, and that "they are given simple food, clothes etc. for maintenance. They must live at our Institutes. Some of them also renounce marriage and parenthood." Of course from what has gone before, renouncing marriage means renouncing sex. This a physiological blunder.

Then he gives twelve precepts for his followers. One of these is "Take care of your body and enjoy good health and long life", which cannot be done by renouncing sex. "Love Humanity, do your Duty etc." may mean different things for different persons. The sex obsession is once more expressed in the words "Be pure and chaste and shun lewdness and

adultery". The very word adultery indicates a possessive attitude towards human beings, which has nothing rational about it. In spite of the fact that Dr. Har Dayal denies the existence of God, he is as great a mystic as Gandhi. Rationalism is not a particular set of doctrines, it is an attitude of mind, which Dr. Har Dayal is very far from possessing.

Dr. Har Dayal's ambition seems merely to be to found a new religion called "Dayalism", and he may even succeed, because all the mysticism needed for a religion is there, though there is absolutely nothing new in his teachings. But was there anything new in Christ's teachings, if indeed such a person ever existed?

We can only hope that the world will soon grow out of its mystical propensities.

POPULARISING DARWINISM IN FRANCE

BY

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine

There exists in France a Society known as La MAISON De CULTURE the object of which is to spread scientific knowledge among the masses. In May last, that Society decided whether Darwinism should be included or not among the subjects to be taught to the people. This proposition at once raised some protests among certain professors of biology who, though they are evolutionists in a narrow cause, were evidently not keen Darwinists. Among these were Professor Paul Lemoine of the Paris Museum of Natural History and Professor Pierre P. Grasse of La Sorbonne, both of whom are well known for their articles on Evolution in the *Encyclopedie Francaise*.

In those articles Professor Lemoine, who opposes Darwinism, maintains that Darwinism has not been supported by any biological fact and as a theory of

evolution it throws no light on the process of evolution. Professor Grasse also believes that Darwinism has failed to explain satisfactorily the mysterious process of evolution, though he admits that the transformation of living species was a fact and that the belief of the fixity of species is untenable.

The attitude of these well-known professors towards Darwinism seems to have been that of several other French biologists, and to a great extent it was their views which prevailed among the teachers of evolution in France and, therefore, the official teaching on the subject was based upon such views.

On the other hand, there are also a number of well-known biologists in France who are staunch Darwinists and who believe that the divergent views of their colleagues on the subject can be explained by the fact that that France

has lagged behind England and America in the careful study of Darwinism. In those countries, say these biologists, Darwinism has been seriously studied with the result that there, it is better understood than in France. Hence the contradictory views on the subject among French biologists.

Among the professors of Biology in France who firmly support Darwinism are Professors Georges Tessier and Marcel Prenant, both of La Sorbonne. The latter inaugurated the 'Salle de Biologie' at the recent Exhibition in Paris which attracted considerable attention and proved very instructive to many.

It was decided that before Darwinism could be included among the subjects to be popularized, the question should be settled by a proper debate on the subject by the best known biologists of France. The question to be decided was whether Darwinism is a proved and accepted theory or whether it is an exploded and a discredited one.

It was in a memorable meeting at La Sorbonne on the 6th of May last that the question was decided. The papers had announced the event in such bold headlines as "LE DARWINISME EST-IL PERIME?" That is to say, "Is Darwinism out of date?" that general attention was drawn to the subject. It was, therefore, before a very large audience at La Sorbonne that the discussion was held.

L'Humanite, a French Journal, says that the concourse was so great and the vast amphitheatre of La Salle Richelieu was so crowded that a large number of distinguished people were refused admission and went away disappointed. Among the distinguished biologists who took part in the debate were Professors Lemoine, Grasse, George Tessier, Perez, and Marcel Prenant. The renowned physiologist, Professor Louis Lapicque, Member of the Institute of France presided.

Professor Lemoine opened the proceeding by maintaining that Darwinism has failed to prove that evolution takes

place in the manner it describes. The transformation of species, he said, was so slow and feeble a process that it was beyond the power of observation. Professor Grasse also argued on the same line and contended that Darwinism explains nothing. Professors Tessier, Perez and Prenant then addressed the meeting and brilliantly quoted facts and arguments that took the audience by storm, they simply overwhelmed their opponents. Among other things they said, they maintained that not only was Darwinism true, but it has been amply demonstrated by such sciences as paleontology, embryology and the existing living forms. They contented that evolution, in the main, has proceeded on the lines described by Darwin.

Professor Lapicque brought the meeting to a close in an eloquent address on the ample evidences of the transformation of species and the truth of Darwinism. The verdict of the house was that Darwinism is proved and has held its ground magnificently after years of intense criticism. It was also decided that it was a fit subject to be taught to the masses.

As a French paper says, the result of this discussion will have a great repercussion in French scientific circles and the teaching of Darwinism to the masses will not fail to revolutionize thought among them.

The masses in France, like those in other parts of the world, are as ignorant of scientific facts as were their ancestors 500 years ago. Hence it is that the marvellous discoveries of astronomy, geology, paleontology, biology and the rest, have not much effect in altering their mediaeval views of things. It is for this reason that religion can still flourish among these people, and the priests being well aware of this see to it that they do not get too enlightened.

Our readers will remember that not long ago, a controversy on Darwinism took place in one of Bombay's leading papers. One of the opponents of Dar-

winism who wrote under the nom-de-plume of "Homo Sapiens" made a fool of himself by saying that "Darwinism is not dead because it was never born." He quoted precisely Professor Lemoine's article in the *Encyclopedie Francaise* to show that French biologists did not believe in Darwinism. Had he known the true reason why such men like Professor Lemoine held erroneous views on Darwinism, he might have been cautious before quoting his views. Had this oppo-

nent of Darwinism in Bombay read the proceedings of the debate at La Sorbonne and seen the headings of the French papers of the 7th May announcing the verdict of the house: "Le Darwinisme et le transformisme ont triomphe a La Sorbonne hier"—that is to say, "Darwinism and transformism triumphed at La Sorbonne yesterday", he would have felt confused and flabbergasted. A Frenchman on seeing him would not have failed to exclaim: 'Qu'elle binette!'

CULTURE IN THE EAST AND WEST

BY

M. N. Roy

(Reproduced from "INDEPENDENT INDIA")

The following is the substance of an address delivered by Mr. M. N. Roy at the Andhra University Union on 26th August 1937.

In order to deal properly with the subject of my speech it is necessary to go into some fundamentals. One should begin by defining the terms. Civilization and culture are very familiar terms. We hear and talk often and much about them. But there is a good deal of misunderstanding about these terms. There is no generally agreed definition. For example, some European scholars hold that India was never civilised, but had a very high culture. This is absurd. How can an uncivilised people have any culture at all? Such obvious absurdities pass as learned opinion simply because of confused notions regarding the relation between civilization and culture. These are not two distinct features of human progress. They are interdependent. They are but two aspects of what is called human progress. If we want to trace the relation, then priority must go to civilization. A people must be civilised before it can produce any cultural values. This will become evident as soon as I pass on to define the terms. But a few introductory remarks must be made before that.

Legend of the Spiritual Genius

The subject of my speech is con-

troversial in another sense. It is assumed that Eastern culture is essentially different from the Western culture. It is a very popular dictum. But a critical student would find little ground for the assumption. Great emphasis is laid on the contrast while comparing the two systems of culture. But few try to find out the cause of the contrast. It is popularly ascribed to the legend of the spiritual genius of the East. But instead of taking for granted that the apparent contrast results from any racial characteristics or national genius, the objective student should enquire if the contrast is fundamental, if there is sufficient reason to assume that there is any fundamental difference.

Its Political Effects.

Much is made of the superficial difference that undoubtedly exists to-day by those who approach philosophical problems not with a scientific outlook, but with a nationalistic bias. But there are two sides of the picture. The other side is the famous dictum of Kipling: "West is West and East is East and the twain shall never meet." This contains a blatantly imperialistic vulgarization of

history. But if we assume a fundamental difference resulting from racial characteristics we cannot dispute the other party drawing inferences convenient for them. If we maintain that by virtue of its racial characteristics the Indian people have chosen a line of social, political and cultural development essentially distinct and different from that followed by the Western people, logically we are compelled to admit the contention that the Indian people are congenitally unable to do those secular things done by the Western people. It may be argued that the secular achievements of the Western people are not beyond the reach of the Indian people, but they have chosen to reject them in favour of something of greater value. However the fact remains that the inhabitants of India are also human beings and therefore must meet and satisfy human necessities, which are primarily physical. Indeed, if we study history, with regard for realities, we find that the development of our people was determined by the exigencies of satisfying physical necessities just as it was the case in other countries. The doctrine that the secular or materialistic culture of the West is foreign to the spiritual genius of India only goes to corroborate the imperialist contention that in secular matters the Indian people must always be protected by others who are experts in those matters. And that is a hypocritical way of saying that the Indian people are not able to administer their affairs on this earth and therefore must be ruled, oppressed and exploited by others. The doctrine of spiritual genius is therefore the obverse of the imperialist doctrine of "the white man's burden." The popular dictum that Eastern culture is fundamentally different from Western culture is not only without any historical foundation and is scientifically untenable; it is politically harmful and prejudicial to the future of our nation.

Past or Future?

The famous Chinese philosopher Hsu Shi made bold and significant obser-

vations in an interview with some learned Christian Missionary who praised the ancient Chinese culture. The wise Chinaman said: "**I have heard enough about these things. You flatter us about our past glory, so that we may forget our present slavery and thus be more amenable to foreign domination**". Hsu Shi is one of the most prominent philosophers of our time. None is more competent to appreciate the ancient culture of China than he. But he is also a realist, and would not sacrifice the *future of his nation for the sake of a dead past*. I wish our philosophers could be equally wise and realistic and instead of being tiresome panegyrists of the past, inspire the nation to march ahead towards a bright future.

The Distinguishing Feature.

As regards what really distinguishes modern Western culture from the traditions which dominate the Indian life even to-day, I shall quote the distinguished Indian philosopher who was the head of your University until recently. In a farewell speech either at this University or at Madras, **Sir Radhakrishnan said that until about 300 years ago, cultural development in Europe did not essentially differ from that in India. The distinction marked since then is characterised by three main principles, namely, Humanism, Rationalism and Democracy.** (The text of the address referred to is not with me). The quotation therefore may not be accurate. But that is the substance of what Sir Radhakrishnan said).

If we wish to rely on authority, there is the highest authority for our rejecting the doctrine that the present difference between the East and West is to be traced to racial characteristics. The distinguishing features of the cultural development in the West during the last three-hundred years must have resulted logically from principles underlying the earlier development. If in the earlier period cultural development in India did not essentially differ from that in the

West, there is no reason to assume that the distinguishing features of modern Western culture are foreign to the genius of the Indian people. Should we dispute the fact that until recently there was no fundamental difference, then we must be compelled to make the damaging admission that Indian culture has no room for the peculiarly Western ideas of Humanism, Rationalism and Democracy. If these are the distinguishing features we cannot claim any distinction on the part of Indian culture without disclaiming these ideas. And then the assumed spiritual genius would no longer be a matter of pride; we should be ashamed of it.

Religious Thought in the West

Now let us pass on to the subject matter itself. What is the token of the spiritual superiority of our culture? Spiritualism is only a pseudo-philosophical name for the religious mode of thought. That being the case, historically the distinction reduces itself to the fact that India has retained the religious mode of thought much longer than Europe. The religious mode of thought is a historical necessity. In a certain period of social and intellectual development man cannot think except in terms of religion. The fundamental feature of the religious mode of thought is to ascribe every wordly event ultimately to some super-natural or superhuman agency. **History shows that until recently the intellectual and cultural development of Europe was dominated by religion. Therefore we can hardly claim any distinction for our culture either in the past or in the present on the ground of religiosity. Our spiritual genius is a myth.** Until recently the Western people as a whole was as religious as the Indian. They have developed a new mode of thought—the scientific outlook of life. There is absolutely no reason to assume that given the conditions which have thus revolutionised the intellectual life of Europe, the same change would not take place in India.

Environments Determine Idea

Intellectual and cultural development of a human community is ultimately determined by the physical conditions under which it lives. There are philosophers who challenge this point of view. But the generally accepted view is that physical environments and social conditions, very largely, if not entirely, do determine the ideas of men. This view can be disputed only by those who think that philosophy can disregard the achievements of modern science, and the knowledge of history.

Civilization and Culture.

A definition of terms will help us to proceed further. **Civilization is the result of the struggle of man for conquering the forces of nature.** The ability to take up that struggle distinguishes man from the lower animal. Animals are entirely subservient to the forces of nature. Man begins to struggle against them, and in course of time establishes his mastery over them progressively. In the beginning, all his efforts are concentrated for earning the means of subsistence. Eventually, partial mastery over the forces of nature enables him to subsist and procreate by spending only a part of his physical energy. Then he begins to produce what is called cultural values. Thus, leisure is the prerequisite for culture; and that condition is created only when man has acquired sufficient power to conquer the forces of nature progressively. Culture thus is a result of civilization. This, on its part, is motivated purely physically. In other words, **civilization is always materialistic. Spiritualistic civilization is a contradiction in terms; and since there can be no culture without civilization, purely spiritualist culture is more a matter of imagination than reality.**

Superiority of Modern Culture.

But what can happen, and actually did happen in history is that in the earlier stages of evolution human intellect is necessarily circumscribed by the religi-

ous mode of thought. Consequently, cultural values produced at that stage assume a "spiritualistic" complexion. As soon as greater mastery over the forces of nature enables man to reject the religious mode of thought for rationalism and scientific outlook, cultural values need no longer have any hypothetical spiritual or metaphysical sanction. Then, they can stand on their own merit. Thus secular culture of the more highly civilised man is superior to the spiritualist (religious) culture developed in a backward stage of civilization. In other words, just as the culture of the civilised man is superior to that of the "splendid barbarian," just so is the culture of a modern civilised nation superior to that of a civilised community still dominated by the religious mode of thought which characterises a backward stage of civilization. The comparison, however, is not ethical, but historical. It would be erroneous to maintain that a more advanced stage of civilization and the resulting secular culture are **better** (in the sense of being morally more meritorious and therefore preferable) than the earlier stage. The point is that one is prior to the other, and the latest is associated with the highest stage of human progress hitherto attained.

Foundation of Religion.

I have said that the religious mode of thought is a historical necessity. Faith is the foundation of religion and it is born of ignorance. Knowledge is conditional upon man's conquest of the forces of nature. In a backward stage of evolution, ignorance therefore is shared by all human communities irrespective of their geographical location. The cause of the religious mode of thought is neither geographical nor racial; it is social and intellectual.

Man, a Rational Being

We are told that man is instinctively religious. That means, to say, that to believe is human nature. Ancient history of humanity, however, tells us an entirely different story. Man is natur-

ally a rational being. The ability to think distinguishes him from the lower animals; and thinking is a rational process. Without reason, there is no thought. Man's nature is to enquire, to find the causes of whatever happens around him and govern his being and becoming. The exigencies of physical existence make man instinctively rational. His very existence is a continuous struggle against the forces of nature. Social, intellectual and cultural progress of mankind is determined by the degree of its ability to harness the forces of nature for its benefit. This ability depends on the knowledge of the causes of the natural phenomena. Knowledge is power. Only the knowledge of the causes of natural phenomena equips man with the power to harness them for his benefit.

God, the creation of man

So the spiritual development of man begins with enquiry and not with the belief in some mysterious final cause. Only at a later stage of development he is compelled to fall back on faith. With all his spirit of enquiry, the primitive man fails to find physical causes of the natural phenomena. So, he attributes them to supernatural forces. Even that original assumption of supernatural agencies result from the rationalist principle that everything must have a cause—something cannot come out of nothing. He sees that the events in his own little world are results of actions or will of himself or some other man. From this experience he infers that the natural phenomena must happen similarly in pursuance of the will of some beings; only, the natural phenomena, being so very much greater than events taking place in fulfilment of human will, must be brought about by proportionately greater and more powerful beings. But man's imagination is limited by his own being. He creates gods after his own image. He imagines the superhuman agencies bringing about natural phenomena to be immensely greater and immensely more powerful human beings.

Thus the imagination of the primitive man, baffled in his primitive enquiry regarding the causes of natural phenomena, populates the entire nature with a variety of Gods.

Death Knell of Religion.

Every religion can be traced back to this origin of faith in superhuman beings or supernatural agencies. Once the primitive conditions of life compel man to fall back on this faith, the whole intellectual and cultural development over the subsequent period is dominated by it. Religious mode of thought comes to be the governing principle of human development over a long period of history. The inability to explain natural phenomena in physical terms compels man to put on the chain of spiritual slavery. **Religion is spiritual slavery because, being based on faith, it necessarily sets a limit to the intellectual development of man.** He throws off this chain only when he can explain the natural phenomena otherwise than through the assumption of superhuman or supernatural causes. In other words, **the rise of modern science sounds the death-knell of the religious mode of thought.**

Even when logically liquidated, the religious mode of thought continued to dominate the intellectual and cultural life of India because there did not rise social forces the operation of which is necessary for the development of the alternative, rationalist, scientific mode of thought. By the 15th and 16th century these revolutionary forces appeared in Europe. Consequently, the religious mode of thought, logically liquidated by scholasticism, was formally replaced by rationalism and materialistic philosophy which was reinforced by the epoch-making discoveries of natural science. Over a long period of history cultural development in the West as well as in the East took place on an identical line until the European people found themselves in the position to revert to the spirit of enquiry that had inspired ancient human

civilization everywhere in the world. Ancient human thought, in India as well as elsewhere, was materialist. Its motive force was enquiry. This is a historical fact in the light of which we are able to discard the dogma that faith is inherent in human nature. We can come to the same conclusion also through logical argumentation. To believe is to submit. When I believe that there is a super-human agency that dictates, dominates and pre-determines everything that happens in the world, I can no longer claim any creative power for man. And if human being were destitute of creative power, there could be neither civilization nor culture, both these being human achievements. Belief in the universal sovereignty of a myterious divine power sets a very narrow limit to human activity and transforms men into mere puppets. Therefore faith cannot be the guiding principle of human nature. At a certain stage of social evolution, it may satisfy the spiritual needs of man. But under different, more advanced conditions, it becomes positively antagonistic to human strivings and human aspirations.

I have said that ancient human thought throughout the world was materialistic; that it was inspired by the spirit of enquiry. Let us see if it was so in India. We are handicapped by the absence of any reliable history of the ancient Indian Civilization. The scanty historical material is mixed up with myths and legends. Yet there is clear evidence to corroborate the view I am putting forward. In the first place, the religion of the Vedas is a natural religion. And natural religion originates in the primitive spirit of enquiry. I have already depicted how it develops. And there is no reason to believe that in India it developed in any other way. Indeed, the Vedas themselves, particularly the earlier books, record the primitive rationalistic origin of natural religion. Then turn to the Upanishads, and you find the spirit of enquiry so highly developed as to affect the idea of God itself. The whole Aupanishadic literature is

devoted to answering the questions: What is the nature of God? And: How can we know God? In the earlier period, baffled in their inquiry after the causes of natural phenomena, our forefathers, like other founders of ancient civilizations, had populated nature with a rich galaxy of gods. Then followed the period of spiritual adolescence in which explanations offered by childish imagination could no longer satisfy the spirit of enquiry inherent in human nature. In the first place, the behaviour of the gods themselves had to be explained. That was done by assuming a super-god. Just as the minor gods of natural religion were different from men, so the super-god must be differentiated from the minor gods. The differentiation was made by depriving him of a personality and endowing him with the imaginary and incomprehensible attribute of absoluteness. The super-god was conceived as an omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient principle pervading the entire scheme of being and becoming, but is not in it, and is never affected by it. Having manufactured this curious idea of the godhead, the ingenious manufacturers were confronted with a baffling problem—how could man know this God who was no longer a superhuman being, but conceived a conglomeration of mysterious attributes beyond the reach of human mind? There naturally arose the question: How can we know God? Because if it was not possible to know him, and the imaginary attributes ascribed to him made him naturally unknowable, how could his existence be proved? One problem led to another—What is the nature of God? The Upanishads record a spiritual development motivated by these questions which threaten to undermine faith and challenge the logical validity of the primitive religious thought. It is generally accepted that the fundamental principles of Indian philosophy are to be found in the Upanishads. If that is so, then the fundamental principle of Indian philosophy is the spirit of enquiry, that is to say rationa-

lism. Thus we come to the conclusion that ancient Indian philosophy originated exactly from the same sources as, for example, the ancient Greek philosophy. Both were rationalistic and therefore necessarily tended towards materialism. A look at the systems of classical Indian philosophy will drive the point home.

Enquiry into the nature of God was the motive of the Aupanishadic literature, which contains the fundamental principles of Indian philosophy. As soon as we begin to ask questions about the nature of God we contradict the very conception of God. Faith precludes enquiry, and the conception of God is founded on faith. The positive outcome of the Aupanishadic literature, therefore, was the end of faith as the guiding principle of the spiritual development of ancient India. Enquiry into the nature of God inevitably led to the revolutionary discovery that God was a creation of man's imagination.

Which of the six systems of Indian philosophy is the oldest is a controversial question. Internal evidence, however, proves the priority of the Sankhya system which came to the conclusion that there is no evidence to prove the existence of God. That was indeed a very revolutionary conclusion striking at the very root of the religious mode of thought. But there is something still more revolutionary in Indian philosophy. The Vaisheshik system of Kanada attempts to trace the origin of the world in terms of physical entities. That was a purely materialistic system which tried to do without the hypothesis of any supernatural agency. European materialism originated in the atomic theory of the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus. There is a striking similarity between the philosophy of Democritus and that of Kanada who also traced the origin of all physical phenomena to atoms. Thus we find that originally Indian philosophy did not differ at all from the Western philosophy. Both were materialistic. Modern interpreters

are either ignorant of, or conveniently forget that aspect of Indian philosophy. They maintain that the Vedanta system is the Indian philosophy. Whatever may be the merit of the Vedanta system, it certainly did not result directly from the spirit of enquiry contained in the Upanishads. The direct result of that were the earlier systems, namely, Vaisheshik and Sankhya. The Vedanta, on the other hand, does not follow logically from the earlier schools, but represents a relapse into the religious mode of thought which starts from metaphysical assumptions. Besides, the spiritual development in ancient India did not follow the path of metaphysical speculation opened up by the Vedanta system. It followed the path of rationalism and materialism as indicated by the earlier systems. The positive outcome of ancient Indian philosophical thought was the rise of Buddhism and subsequently Jainism. These were thoroughly rationalistic and tended clearly towards materialism. They drew their inspiration from the Vaisheshik system. The history of Indian philosophy is still to be written. When that will be done scientifically, Kanada will be given the honoured place of the father of Indian philosophy. And he was a materialist.

Thus history does not provide any evidence for the contention that Indian culture is distinguished from the Western; that it is the creation of a people inherently religious, of a people endowed with a spiritualist genius. Much emphasis is laid on the contrast between the Eastern and Western culture. But this contrast does not go back farther than three to four hundred years. Previous to that, similarities were much greater than differences, which necessarily resulted from the divergence of climatic conditions and other physical reasons.

We shall arrive at the same conclusion if we approach the question from the point of view of pure thought. Here again the point of departure should be a definition of term. What is philoso-

phy? Learned people talk much about philosophy without answering this question. The result is a mass of confusion.—mystification, instead of illumination. Literally, philosophy means the occupation of the friend of knowledge must be to know. Historically, the task of philosophy was to explain existence. Now, if philosophy cannot explain nature in terms of laws inherent in itself, it ceases to be philosophy and becomes religion. Explanation with the aid of metaphysical assumptions is no explanation. Faith does not explain anything. It simply puts off the problem. Therefore, by its very nature, philosophy cannot but be materialistic. Originally it was materialistic in India as well as in the West. Laws of nature can be discovered only empirically. A physical explanation of the world is possible only on the basis of that discovery. The founders of philosophy were handicapped by the absence of the pre-condition for the accomplishment of the task they had set to themselves. The physical explanation they offered was very largely hypothetical. But an hypothetical explanation is not real explanation. It cannot satisfy the thirst of enquiry. Consequently, in course of time, philosophy deviated from the original rationalist spirit and degenerated into a theological explanation of nature. This process took place not only in the West, but also in India. In India the process culminated in the Vedanta system and its subsequent elaborations which have come down to us as the quintessence of ancient Indian thought. The degeneration, however, was unavoidable. It was determined by objective conditions—the inability of man to establish that much mastery over the forces of nature as could bring the laws of nature within his knowledge. In other words, theological explanation of nature, traditionally known as philosophy, in India as well as in the West, resulted from the inability of our forefathers to explain nature in terms of physical laws. Therefore, it was bound to be discarded as soon as

mankind made the necessary progress in the unceasing struggle for the conquest of the forces of nature. For various secular reasons the European people were more successful in that struggle than other human communities. Therefore, the revolt of human spirit against theology began in Europe. There the rise of modern science had equipped man with the knowledge necessary for resuming the task undertaken but left unaccomplished by the founders of philosophy in India as well as in Europe. That happened only about four hundred years ago. Until then religion was the standard of all cultural values. European culture was as spiritualist as the Indian.

The middle ages in Europe—from the downfall of the Roman Empire to the fifteenth century was one of the most religious periods of human history. We know of the great religious teachers and metaphysical speculators who flourished in our country. But it is not generally known to Indians that in the middle-ages Europe produced a similar type of intellectual leaders in a greater number. As against one Sankaracharya in our country, medieval Europe can boast of several great rationalist theologians. The scholastic thought of medieval Europe was intensely spiritualistic. Only, that brand of spiritualism, whether Eastern or Western, is the most vulgar form of materialism. Europe as well as India abandoned ancient philosophical materialism and went through a period of intellectual and cultural development dominated by the religious mode of thought. Essentially, it is the reverse of spiritualism because it is selfish and egoistic. It places the individual in the centre of the world. Concerned with individual salvation, man forgets his social responsibilities. In quest of some imaginary higher state of existence, one runs away from the problems of real existence. Religious renunciation is the worst form of selfishness. Religious belief is bargaining with God.

At the close of the middle-ages,

Europe entered a new stage of intellectual development which revolutionised the entire mode of thought. The result was a complete revaluation of traditional cultural values. They were no longer measured by the standards set by religion or metaphysical speculation. From that great revolution—perhaps the greatest hitherto experienced by mankind—begins the distinction between the Western culture and the Indian. In the absence of knowledge to be derived from men's mastery over nature, rationalist and materialist mode of thought developed in the antique period; in India as well as in Europe, human progress had to take place under the predominance of religion. Spiritualism, therefore, springs from ignorance. The religious mode of thought is the badge of intellectual backwardness. So, while the religious mode of thought was unavoidable and, therefore, can be regarded as a historical necessity, human progress—the real spiritual development of the mankind—is bound to transgress it. As soon as in his struggle for the conquest of the forces of nature, man acquires sufficient knowledge, he breaks away from the religious mode of thought. Knowledge of nature enables him to dispense with the faith in the supernatural. About four hundred years ago, Europe experienced the greatest revolution in the history of human progress. It rejected the religious and metaphysical standards of cultural values, and formulated new principles which were to guide spiritual development and social relations. The new principles were Humanism, Rationalism and Democracy. I have already mentioned that, in the opinion of Sir Radhakrishnan, who is regarded as the leading exponent of the history of Indian culture and philosophy, these principles distinguish modern European culture from the Indian. The opinion is all the more authoritative because Sir Radhakrishnan's knowledge of the history of European thought is as vast as that of the Indian. If these are the

(Continued on page 84)

ABOUT BOOKS

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

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Let us talk about books. But it must be about *books*, not about a mere spate of words, an incoherent heap of printed pages, having nothing in common but the covers in which they are enclosed, and from which they threaten soon to break loose, as if in resentment of their forced association. We will have nothing to do with such as come within Lamb's category of books that are not books—cookery-books, pocket encyclopedias, Debrett's Peerage, or such combinations of paper and cloth that fill the shelves of an hotel writing-room. So also will we view with suspicion those regiments of biographies of prominent nobodies and impermanent somebodies that are turned out by professional biographers who are ready to write a life of anybody from a defaulting financier to a king's favourite pony—if only there is a promising and gullible public to hand. None of these writings has any more valid claim to be called a book than a lump of cheese and a hunk of bread have the right to be called a dinner.

There are some writings that, in a brazen confession of their character, are openly advertised as "bed-side" books, and there are human beings, bearing, as Sergeant Buzfuz would say, the "outward semblance of a man," who shamelessly proclaim that they cannot sleep o' nights until they get hold of a book that lulls them to unconsciousness. To them a book is not a stimulant, it is an opiate. To read because one is wakeful is one thing, but to read because one wishes to go to sleep is quite another kettle of fish. A book that is a book is a friend for the sake of whom one will gladly keep awake, not something that a man acquires in order to be able quickly to lose consciousness of its possession. If one lived in a land where the punishment fitted the crime, one feels that publisher and writer—twin compa-

nions in iniquity—would be prevented from ever sleeping again, or from ever waking up once they went to sleep. To announce a thing as a bed-side book is to confess that it is neither written nor published to satisfy the delight of reading, but as a short and easy way of inducing cerebral inactivity. A constant straining of the muscles of the eye is practised in order to numb what in such cases does duty for intellect. One of the Roman Catholic descriptions of hell—borrowed from the story of Midas—is that of misers compelled constantly to swallow quantities of molten gold. If there is a special hell for the inventor of bed-side books, he is probably being consumed in flames fed with his own productions, or compelled to read his own works to an audience that falls into a deep sleep directly he appears on the platform.

* * * *

Nature and Books.

When we speak of the book of nature we are using language that is both exact and picturesque, and we are paying a tribute to both. For they have this in common. If we would take from either we must bring to either. No man ever got from nature more than he put into it. Nature is to this extent like a bank. It will give us back what we have deposited, but unlike a bank it will pay a lavish rate of interest if we prove ourselves worthy of it. The field over which a child walks is not the same field that is being trodden by the sophisticated adult at its side. Nor is it the same field that engages the attention of the botanist, the poet, or the geologist. Each finds a different object of contemplation; the feature that is most apparent to one may be almost absent to the other. When Oscar Wilde said it was nature that imitated art and not art that imitated nature, and pointed to the gor-

geous sunsets that never existed for people until Turner painted them, he was not voicing a mere witticism. He was uttering a profound truth. Nature gives us back, with usury, what we bring to it. It gives plenty of brutality to the brute, it preaches a measure of co-operation and kindness to the better disposed. Nature changes with our knowledge, our desires and our moods.

As with nature so with books. What we get from a book depends upon what we are able to *put into* it. A book reflects our minds, and if they are muddy, what we get back is obscure and ill-defined. You may get philosophy from a jest-book, and nothing but a jibe from a Spinoza. It is not a bad test of a man to put him into a room filled with books and note the one that attracts his attention. There is a gravitative affinity between a man and the books he loves. It is the greatness of Shakespeare, not that he is able to instruct the wise and entertain the weary, or to lay before us the springs of action and their expression in conduct, but that he can fit every mood and every stage of human life. An intelligent child may read a comedy of Shakespeare and find a delightful fairy story, a youth may get a pretty romance from the same play, and the adult will find it full of a ripe wisdom that chimes in with his most contemplative mood.

About both books and nature there is, too, a great humility and a discriminating generosity. Neither will speak unless they are spoken to; but speak to them and they will readily answer, and couch their answers in terms suitable to our understanding. But never more than this. They will not give us more than we can carry away. The man who makes acquaintance with a book has made a friend whom he can visit when he will, and always find himself free of the best it has. It is there for his taking, and it is his own fault if he leaves empty-handed.

* * * *

Good and Bad Books

For these reasons there are few morally bad books. Those who believe

to the contrary should confine themselves to the cheaper kind of daily journalism, or to pious tracts wherein they may find all the suggested evil they are so eagerly hunting. There are books that are badly written, or foolishly written, but allowing their right to be called "books," we deny that they are morally bad ones. I do not deny that many people feel when reading a particular book that it is demoralizing in its influence. But the demoralization is with them, not of the book. What the book does is to find them out, expose them to themselves, and they are shocked at the revelation. They are like a man rising from a sick bed, who looking at himself in the glass is horrified by the ravages of the disease from which he has been suffering. The parent who foolishly forbids his child to read this or that, is not, as he imagines, guarding the innocence of his children, he is giving them their first hint of where to find something they would never have sought—and would probably never have discovered but for the prohibition. He is teaching them to be sly when he should encourage them to be open, instructing them how to discover concealed meanings in unlikely passages, developing a liking for a form of pleasure for which they might never have nursed an appetite, had they not been told how careful they must be to avoid it. Ruskin's advice is sound—turn your girl loose in a library, let her read where she will, what she will. She will know far better than you what she ought to read. It would be a good thing for

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those who are so ready to mistrust the tastes and instincts of their children to commence by mistrusting themselves—at least to the extent of doubting whether they are really fitted to be the infallible guides of their children.

* * * *

Books as Companions

Other things equal, for a man really to love books he must possess them. If circumstances compel him to love them at a distance he is the victim of a torturing hunger, of an appetite that can never be wholly satisfied. The man who is content with books borrowed from a library is no book-lover, and therefore can never get from any book all it has to give him. You can no more get the best out of a borrowed book than you can understand domestic experience by looking at another man's wife, or know what a home means by spending a week in a casual ward. To get the best of a good book one must live with it. Books must occupy their own honoured place in one's house, as a friend is given the right to his favourite chair. They must not be shut in a cupboard, or stowed away in some room that nobody visits, just kept out of the way as a litter hated by a fussy and unappreciative wife. Yet to own books merely because one has the money to buy them, and to display them merely because they are costly or rare is not to proclaim oneself a lover of books. They must be a part of one's life, an irreplaceable part of one's home. One must have the humour that will lead him to wander round his shelves picking up a book here and there as one might pay a visit to some cherished old friend. Never mind the people who say that books are a nuisance because they harbour dust. If they harbour dust, they dispel fog. Books are loyal and honest friends. They will deal with one frankly and directly, will talk to one in a language which is plain. They will set the past before one in a manner there is no mistaking; will tell you to your face that you have been a fool or compliment you on the wisdom you have acquired. When after a lapse of years

one goes round those shelves on which these old companions stand in their green, brown, black, blue, red or other coloured uniform in an array that is never discordant, and you select one for a rapid glance at this or that page, how often then does one say of some passage, "What a fool I must have been to have missed this gem," or "Whatever did I see in this fellow to be attracted to him?" Human weakness or pride would suggest prevarication when our past is thus brought home to us, but our books will speak to us straightforwardly and truthfully, neither hiding our own weakness nor parading our better quality. These reminiscent excursions tell us without circumlocution what we have missed, how often we have taken fustian for good broad-cloth. And if we are of those who habitually pencil-mark books the praise or condemnation of ourselves is the more evident.

* * * *

The Great Adventure

A well-stocked library—or even a poorly-stocked one—is an incitement to adventure. Books open a world that is almost without limits, a world in which the greater our explorations the greater its wonders and possibilities. Those who love adventure have missed its highest form if they do not know what it is to pursue an idea through volume after volume, finding it here, losing it there, tracking it to its ultimate breeding-place in some lone thinker's brain, and then retracing its developed possibilities. The hunting of a tiger or an elephant is child's play at the side of this occupation. In animal-hunts its nature is foreseen. All that one can hope for is repetition. Its danger is comparatively trifling and its pleasure transient. But in the chase of an idea, success is but the stepping-stone to another adventure, and even failure may mark a triumph, since either it ends in the certainty that no further progress is possible along that line, or it inspires to renewed endeavour. Men have grown tired of the chase of power, of money, of everything save the chase of ideas.

I have said nothing about what books one ought to read. I do not know. Lists of the best hundred books are of little use. The world of books is not to be most profitably traversed along beaten paths. One may be a blockhead with a multitude of books or a philosopher with a few. The great thing is to acquire the reading habit, and the younger one is when it is acquired the better. That should be the parent's aim. Surround your children with books—all sorts of books—and don't bother too much about "improving their minds" so that they may become copies of yourselves. It is originals the world needs, not copies. Encourage your children to read, and let them be the judges of what they will read. Do not force their reading, neither restrict it. Take no notice of your own tastes, let them indulge theirs. Let them pick their own way through a land where the main roads are many and the side paths are innumerable, and where even to get lost is to find what might not have been otherwise discovered. The best education for your child, with books as with other things, consists in placing within its reach the possibility of self-education. Perhaps, one day, parents themselves will acquire enough wisdom to realize that self-education is the only form of real education, that each must teach himself if he is ever to learn anything worth acquiring. In books, certainly, one's own tastes and capacity are his only profitable guides. Each reader will ultimately select the books that suit him; and each book will in turn select its reader. It is a selective operation on both sides. We judge our books, but they just as surely judge us. Happy is the man who has chosen the best books, for it means that he has been chosen by the best books. He has been admitted to the company of the immortals.

Who loveth not his brother at his side
How can he love a dim dream deified.

—James Thomson.

CULTURE IN THE EAST AND WEST

(Continued from page 80)

distinguishing features, can we claim superiority for our "spiritualist" culture which rejects them? Should we be proud or ashamed of the "superiority?" Let us have a look at these fundamental principles of "Western materialism" of which we are so critical and which we reject as incompatible with the peculiar genius of our people.

Humanism removes God from the centre of the world and gives that place of honour to man. The human replaces the super-human as the motive force of our existence. Humanism frees mankind from the spiritual bondage of the religious mode of thought. According to it, man is not a helpless being destined to behave in pursuance of some inscrutable universal will which he can admire but never understand; he is the maker of his own destinies. His behaviours are to be governed by his own intelligence and the welfare of the community of which he is a member. Rationalism is the corollary of this revolutionary philosophy of life. It is the antithesis of faith which is the guiding principle of human existence dominated by the religious mode of thought. Rationalism refuses to take anything for granted. It knows no authority. It does not accept any doctrine, however popular or venerable, which cannot stand the test of reason. By establishing the sovereignty of human intelligence, it opens up the way to the real spiritual development of man. It declares that spiritual liberation is incompatible with the religious mode of thought which seeks to perpetuate ignorance as immutable human nature. In short, Rationalism completely revolutionises human existence. The principle of Democracy results logically also from the humanist conception of life. Just as Rationalism challenges all spiritual authority, so does the principle of Democracy dispute the absoluteness of any secular power. The belief in God as the absolute ruler of the world leads to the establishment of absolute monarchy. If our spiritual existence is

to be guided by a supernatural force which knows no law, politically we are to accept the supreme sovereignty of a secular monarch. No advocate of human progress would defend monarchistic political principles. But we cannot reject these principles while still clinging to the religious mode of thought which compels us to be subordinated to an absolute metaphysical authority. Spiritualism thus stands on the way to the political freedom of man. Natural religion of the primitive man is a democratic religion. It is the ideological relaxation of ancient democracy. Higher forms of religion demanding complete subordination to a supreme spiritual authority, either in the form of a personal God or some intangible metaphysical category, represents the ideology of a society in which primitive democracy has disappeared to make room for the subordination of the people to an arbitrary power. The principle of Democracy, therefore, strikes at the root of the spiritualist conception of life.

The principle of Democracy eventually set forth in the famous "Declaration of the Rights of Man" is one of the fundamental characteristics of modern civilization. Can we be proud of a culture which by its very nature rejects this principle? If we reject Democracy then the contemporary history of our country becomes meaningless. Striving for political independence is the motive force of our national life to-day. That is to say the secular life of the Indian people is being governed by the "Western" principle of Democracy. And as I have explained above, the principle of Democracy results from those of Humanism and Rationalism. Our struggle for political freedom will not be successful so long as we remain wedded to the teleological view of life, which logically makes no room for the rights of man. If we do not reject the dogma of providential will and be inspired with the revolutionary conviction that man is the maker of his destiny, we are not entitled to claim the right of self-determination.

to demand the right to rule our country. A truly religious man cannot claim the right to remake the world. Religion is faith in teleological predetermination. According to this venerable view of life, the British conquest of India should be regarded as a result of divine will; the present state of political slavery of the Indian people should be accepted as providentially preordained. We, human beings, have neither the power nor the right to improve upon divine dispensation. So, you see, our struggle for national freedom is either irreligious, a negation of our spiritualist profession, or it is meaningless. Therefore, I say, be conscious of the impulses that are guiding your behaviour to-day. Don't let the reality be clouded by romance. For all practical purposes you have given up the religious mode of thought. To-day it is nothing more than a prejudice and in the case of many sheer hypocrisy. If you young intellectuals want to guide our country to freedom and prosperity which are the pre-conditions of cultural progress, you must free yourselves from traditional ideas which essentially are chains of intellectual slavery. Then you must be honest—honest to yourselves. Have the courage to analyse your behaviour, to visualise the contents of your professed ideals. This precious doctrine of spiritual superiority is a sign of our intellectual dishonesty. We are human beings and, therefore, are subject to physical laws that govern human existence; it is quite natural and legitimate for us to have human aspirations and strive for secular well-being. Why should we not have the courage to admit what we are doing? We simply do not think out our thoughts to the end. Our intellect still remains under the shadow of faith. We use our reason only to rationalise the irrational. We are afraid. The doctrine of spiritual superiority is a psychological phenomenon; it is the token of inferiority complex on the part of the Indian intellectual.

The development of human culture is not geographically determined. Only those

devoid of historical perspective distinguish different cultural systems according to the points of the compass. The distinction between Western and Eastern culture is not geographical; it is historical. Whatever might have been the relation in the past, to-day we are culturally more backward than the Europeans. There is no ground to be ashamed of this backwardness. It is not due to any innate inferiority on the part of the Indian people. Given similar conditions of physical existence, the cultural development of the Indian people would have been similar to that of the Europeans. Instead of interpreting our backwardness as a sign of superiority, we should set to ourselves the historical task of creating the necessary conditions. Even to-day we are doing it. While taking up a ridiculously supersilious attitude towards Western civilization, all the time we have been imitating it. And as a human community we are bound to do so. The European people is a part of humanity. The achievements of modern Europe are reared upon the foundation of earlier achievements made by other sections of mankind. Thus, the modern European culture represents the highest stage of human development hitherto reached. It is a common human heritage. The Indian people is a member of the human family. In the past, they made valuable contributions to the common heritage. Therefore, to-day, they should not be ashamed of claiming their share in it.

Modern European culture is the result of the tremendous progress made by the people concerned in consequence of their increasing mastery over the forces of nature. Higher civilization has produced a higher culture. While Europe was forging ahead, India together with other countries which, for one reason or another, failed to participate in the development of modern science, lagged behind. That took place only during the last three hundred to four hundred years. The contrast between the Eastern and Western culture is no more old. Modern science

and the application of technology in the struggle for life revolutionised the conditions under which the European people lived and consequently revolutionised also their mode of thought. Once it was discovered that natural phenomena are governed by physical laws inherent in nature itself, it was no longer necessary to assume any supernatural agency for explaining the problems of our being and becoming. Submit India to a similar revolution of the conditions of secular life and she will develop the rationalist and democratic mode of thought which distinguishes modern European culture. That revolution is a historical necessity. It is overdue in India. But it must take place. We can make up for the lost time by learning from those who have preceded us on the road to human progress. By refusing to do that, we simply try to set back the clock of history and stultify our strivings for political freedom and cultural advance.

Even to-day, the antiquated religious mode of thought dominates our life because the social system underlying it still exists though it is rotten to the core and on the point of breaking down. Economically and politically, you desire to go forward, but ideologically you cherish values hundreds of years old. Spiritual revivalism vitiates our whole national life to-day. It contradicts all our secular strivings and aspirations. Cultural values are not everlasting and immutable. Useful in one epoch of history, they become useless and even detrimental in another. In course of its development, mankind produces new values and reevaluates old values to suit the purposes of life under changed conditions. Sooner or later we in our country will have to do so. Then all the distinction between the Western and Indian culture will disappear.

The magnificent history of the rise of modern science is generally known to you. I need not go into it in detail. I shall only mention the great discovery which initiated the revolution. That was the replacement of the traditional

geocentric conception of the Universe by the heliocentric conception. The discovery of Copernicus displaced not only the earth from the centre of the Universe, but reducing man to the status of an insignificant entity in the grand cosmic scheme, dethroned God from the throne of universal sovereignty. Once it was discovered that the being and becoming of man are governed by imperious physical laws, the doctrine that human will is the expression of the inscrutable universal divine will could not be maintained.

The rise of modern science in Europe, however, was not entirely determined by physical causes. The precondition for it had been laid by the scholastic thought of the middle ages. The religious mode of thought has its logic as well as any other mode of thought. Scholasticism was the most highly developed form of religious rationalism. It carried the logic of religious thought to the conclusion that everything in the world is governed by law. Thus, teleological rationalism laid the foundation for the modern scientific thought. The religious mode of thought is bound to be dissolved if it is carried to its logical conclusions. It breaks down under the contradictions of its own logic. The fundamental weakness of Indian philosophy is that it never developed the grand idea of a law-governed Universe. India's failure to participate in the creation of modern science is largely due to that weakness. Philosophy dissolves religion. But in India, it never attained even the stage of teleological rationalism. Therefore, instead of dissolving, it reinforced religion. Except for the earlier Vaiseshik and Sankhya systems, Indian philosophy is theology. It places the final cause or the First Principle beyond the reach of human understanding, and thereby subordinates reason to faith. Instead of undermining the primitive idea of God, it re-establishes the idea through a relapse into faith. The faithful can never subordinate God to any

limitation. For them God is either an arbitrary being or an absolute principle which knows no law. Those who traced the entire scheme of being and becoming to such a Final Cause could not, naturally, conceive of the idea of a law-governed Universe. Since everything happens according to an arbitrary will, there is no knowing what will happen the next day or the next moment. The whole world is a chaos, the creation of a whimsical God. The spiritual reaction that took place after the fall of Buddhism, galvanised religion which prevented philosophy from developing into teleological rationalism. Therefore, the rise of modern science, which draws inspiration from the rationalist teleological idea of a law-governed Universe, was precluded in India.

The modern Western culture is the product of the scientific mode of thought. In India, our spiritual life still remains under the domination of faith. That is the foundation of the difference. But instead of interpreting this difference as a contrast, we must know that it is a matter of accident. It is not natural. It must disappear. It is bound to disappear. Indians are human beings, and as human beings they must struggle against the forces of nature. Until now they have not been very successful in this struggle because of the traditional ideas which deprecate secular progress. But free them from the bondage of tradition, and they will succeed just as the Europeans have succeeded. What is called Western civilization, is the creation of human genius. If Europe disappears with its civilization and culture, the progress made there will take place all over again in other parts of the world. In other words, left to herself, even if we could isolate her entirely from the rest of the world, India will eventually attain that stage of civilization in which cultural values identical with those of modern Europe will be produced. But India is not likely to travel that path. History has made it easier for us. All we need to-day is the courage to throw off

the bondage that kept us behind while Europe went ahead. I have tried to prove that there is nothing like a specifically Western culture. What is called Western culture is the collective achievement of mankind. It belongs to us as much as to the rest of humanity. By deprecating it, we only deprive us of what belongs to us. It belongs to us because, left to ourselves, we are bound to develop it sooner or later. Those who insist on the dogma of India's "spiritual genius" stand in the way of our coming to our own. Don't let yourselves be deprived of your heritage. You can never forego what is called Western civilization unless you want to shun the road of human progress. And as human beings you can never do that.

But as long as we talk of civilization and culture only in Universities, nothing will be achieved. The problems of civilization and culture are closely connected with the political problems confronting us to-day. Because of our political slavery, conditions necessary for the rise of revolutionary ideas could not be created. For their own interest, the foreign rulers of our country have aided the galvanization of antiquated social relations which seek to justify themselves with the authority of traditional ideas. Therefore, we must free ourselves politically. A nation of slaves can have no culture. But unless we have the courage to break away from the bondage of traditions which made us easy victims of foreign conquerors, we shall not be able to free ourselves politically. The practical expression of this much vaunted spiritual superiority is the drug of fatalism which paralyses our people mentally as well as physically. As long as the masses of the Indian people retain their religious genius, secular progress will remain beyond their reach. Activity with the purpose of remaking the world in which we live is incompatible with the belief that everything happens according to the will of God. Religion demands renunciation. It promotes the spirit of resignation. It fosters fatalism. Thus, the

rejection of the religious mode of thought is the condition for our attaining that state of existence in which we shall be able to build up a new system of culture on the foundation laid down in the past. And that new system of culture will not be any different from what we are asked to deprecate as foreign to our national genius. Laws of human development are driving us towards a predetermined direction. Let us be conscious of the revolutionary significance of the aims and aspirations which are inspiring us to-day. Let us not look backwards while we wish to travel forwards. All this talk of spiritual superiority is nothing but an inferiority complex. Let us get rid of this psychological impediment. We have to choose between the path of revolt leading to the system of culture deprecated as foreign to us, or continued political slavery. We have made the choice. We are forced to do so. In order to exist physically, the Indian people must revolt against the conditions to which they are subordinated to-day. Struggle for existence is the essence of life. It is driving us to revolt,—revolt not only against political domination and economic exploitation, but also against spiritual slavery. That is the outstanding feature of our national life to-day, and it ridicules all these wise panegyrics for our precious spiritualist culture as well as the senseless cant against Western civilization.

(Continued from page 90)

fare of India at heart to offer open support and sympathy to the cause of Rationalism that strives to root out bigotry and hypocrisy, that strives to break misconceived fetishes and conventions, and finally strives to bring about harmony and concord in a land, where religion has brought so much friction and division and ill-feeling, that it is considered by some to constitute a major evil of this country.

HAS RATIONALISM A PLACE IN INDIA?

BY

Rudra Kumar Hurry

Religion as understood and practised by most consists of a mixture of history, mythology, superstition, priestcraft, dogmas, rituals, customs and ethics, and blended and bound together to form human society. The present day survival of religions is vastly due to the fact that they supply and satisfy the social needs of the human beings and a great number of people who would wish to break away from their faiths are held back owing to this. It will not be until some new social order is established, independent of religious domination, that people will begin to have courage to renounce the beliefs in which they have no trust and which they have ceased to hold.

At one time religion dominated every sphere of human activity, but with progress its influence began to wane and narrow down. However, it must be admitted that religion has contributed much in the evolution of the human mind; and to a certain extent, it was an absolute necessity for the process of civilisation; but at this stage of our development it has become superfluous and useless, very often colouring the correct perspective and retarding all progressive movements.

Imagination can best be roused in ignorant minds and truly religion thrives most when it is imposed on such material. In the face of knowledge it weakens as is seen in the western countries where people are beginning to think and reason out independently for themselves.

In India, flooded as she is with varying creeds and sects and castes, suspicious and intolerant of each other, the religions present a peculiar and complex problem. It is ironical to state that where there is the greatest need of a rational outlook, the least attempt is made to foster it.

The causes are manifold and deep and ultimately go down to the different modes of living which do not allow of free and intimate mixing. The dress, the food, the language, coupled with a jingoistic sentiment of superiority in one's own faith, form a barrier for the easy and liberal social contacts between the various communities. Travelling, that broadens one's vision and teaches one forbearance, is undertaken in India not for sightseeing or making friends or educating oneself, but for the sake of religious pilgrimages.

An average Indian mentality, susceptible to mystical and vague ideas, is apt to lay too great a stress on religious convictions and induces upon itself a sort of self-deception leading to irrational acts in the name of religion. Hard, matter-of-fact realities, do not appeal or make any impression in such a field. This is due to the fact that the education which the Indian masses receive is solely religious, and since the acquirements in other directions are nil, their minds are filled with quaint images and fanciful ideas culminating in fanaticism. Orthodoxy is stuck to assiduously with well-meaning though harmful sentimentality, and the inrush of new ideas resisted with illogical arguments often supported by quotations from the supposed holy books, which contain contradictory and double statements on almost any subject under the sun.

Happily, side by side with this picture, which obviously is only partial, there is developing another shade also. No country in the world can keep aloof of the various movements and experiments that are being carried on elsewhere. Nations have to learn, reject, assimilate and try out fresh schemes according to their changing needs and exigencies. Another important factor is the machine that has come to stay and its implications on the existence of man-

kind. The first impact of Western civilisation in India took the people by storm and produced a temporary glamour which soon began to fade away as the difference between the ancient age-long customs and the altered conditions of life arose. But in its wake a new pattern of life came into being, namely, the city life and with it the spirit of reconciliation, tolerance and cosmopolitanism. New manners, new fashions, new standards sprung up at times with not too happy results. People began to re-value life not in terms of religion but in the light of political ideologies and economic laws. This state of affairs was at first confined to the student populations, who in their enthusiasm were naturally led to import and examine foreign ideas, and the industrial areas where the people in their struggle to face new problems had to forego much of the village outlook. Gradually, greater numbers of people began to realise that there were absurdities and inconsistencies in their religions which could not be reconciled with reason. They found that the problem of daily bread was not an act of God but a matter of economic planning. Such revelations set out to undermine and displace their former beliefs. The immediate effect of the reaction produced a class of men who, imbued with a high sense of reason, saw through the injustices, tyrannies and malpractices of man-made laws and customs and beliefs. Social reformers sprang up to cleanse their religions of all irrational contents. They gave a new angle, a new interpretation, a new meaning to the old scriptures.

The wave of reformation in the course of time with the vast national and international changes may become a tide of Rationalism, though in a very mild and restricted sense; for the human mind, and particularly the oriental, does not throw away tradition easily but rather attempts to recast it according to its new and altered conditions. It will be enough for those who have the wel-

(Continued on page 88)

- If you recognise Human Equality.
- If you desire Intellectual Liberty and Rational Freedom.
- If you hate Superstition, Priestcraft, Fanaticism, Bigotry and Hypocrisy.

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THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION
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Secretarial Comments.

It seems necessary to point out that we do not expect all our readers to agree with all that appears in "Reason". Indeed we would think very little of them if they did.

We are not here to dictate but to guide. To combat anything and everything that cannot stand the test of Reason. Criticism, modification and rejection are the means by which social progress is achieved. The policy of "Reason" has always been and will always be directed towards that objective.

We are not concerned with publishing what our readers **wish** to know, but what we think they **ought** to know. It is this that distinguishes our journal from the tons of written matter which is poured out from the press every day, week and month.

Throughout the ages Freethinkers have fought for liberties for which the credit has always been taken by others.

No one can deny that there is greater liberty of the press in India to-day than there was only three or four years ago. How many of those who enjoy this liberty know the debt they owe to "Reason" and the Rationalist Association of India? How many even remember the historic trial and acquittal of Dr. C. L. D'Avoine which took place only a few years ago?

The acquittal of Dr. D'Avoine was a definite step forward in the progress of the liberty of the press in India. In that trial the R. A. I. did not only fight for the right of Dr. D'Avoine to criticise anything that he thinks is wrong but it fought and defended that which is the inalienable right of every man and woman who claims to be the citizen of a civilized state.

How many realize that much of the freedom of the press which exists to-day is due to that trial for blasphemy which raised comment throughout India and abroad? No one can deny its importance in the field of religious controversy in India.

And yet the R.A.I. which stands for Free Thought, Free Speech, Free Press and Free Assembly does not receive the support it should. The Reserve Fund which if completed (Rs.15,000) will immediately place the R.A.I. on a firm basis, making the repeated appeal for funds unnecessary, has received a very poor response. Why? Because rationalists in India do not realize the necessity of a strong body of organised Rationalism. It is because many do not realize the far-reaching influence a strong Rationalist

Association can have in directing the intellectual and social progress of this country.

Everywhere in the world continues the struggle of those who stand for freedom of thought, intellectual honesty and social justice against the reactionary forces of ignorance, superstition and retrogression. This is a time when indifference is a crime. A time, which demands action and vigilance on the part of all those who stand for civilization and progress.

Let the rationalists of India not go down in history as those who shirked their duty and by their indifference and inactivity aided the forces of darkness and social injustice.

ABRAHAM SOLOMON,
Jt. Hon. Secretary.

We gratefully acknowledge the following:—

A. Salem Rafiqi, Koepang-Timor, Dutch East-Indies £1; J. R. Labelle, Bombay Rs. 5/-; J. Ezekiel, Bombay, Rs. 5/-; H. V. Hampton, Bombay, Rs. 10/-; Nur Jehan Azad, Hollywood, California, \$3.50.

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A COINCIDENCE.

To,
The Editor of "Reason."
Sir,

I am driven to write a few lines to you by the curious coincidence that a contributor of the same name as my own writes an article on "Spiritualism" in your May-June issue. Since I am a regular contributor to the "Literary Guide,"—the unofficial organ of the Rationalist Press Association in Great Britain, some of my friends over here seem to think that the article is by me—and, since the author explicitly states that he left an English village more than fifty years ago, whereas my age is now only thirty, I do not wish such a confusion of identity to go on, especially as I am as convinced in my Rationalism as is my Indian namesake.

Consequently I do hope that you will make it clear that the John Rowland who writes for the "Literary Guide" of London is not the John Rowland who writes for "Reason" of Bombay.

Yours faithfully,
John Rowland.

15, Sunderland Terrace,
Bayswater, London, W.2.
June 27, 1938.

WORLD UNION OF FREETHINKERS

The World Union of Freethinkers was founded in 1880 by the joint efforts of the Belgian Freethought Societies, the National Secular Society, and the Dutch Societies at a congress at Brussels. Its title was then the International Federation of Freethought Associations. Its first congress was held in London in 1881 and so was its fourth in 1887.

It took its present title in August, 1936.

The World Union has no individual members, but is the machinery established to link together Freethinkers of all kinds and all nations. Since 1885 the seat of the Bureau has been at Brussels, except for two years, 1931-3, at Prague.

By a **Freethinker** is meant one who rejects unverifiable authority in matters of religious opinion, accepts reason as the ultimate test and regards it as the right and duty of every individual to think things out for himself. Many Freethink-

ers are Deists; many are not.

Free Thought and Free Enquiry require Free Speech, Free Press, and Free Assembly.

The World Union unites all Free-thinkers on the condition of political neutrality. The Union is indifferent to the political opinions of the societies supporting it, but the work of the Union is strictly outside politics, except in so far as political doctrine entrenches on free-thought. No official of the Union and no congress speaker has the right to associate the Union or the Movement with any one particular political party or doctrine.

WAR is the negation of any sort of Freedom, in particular it is the foe of the highest form of Freedom, that of the mind. The World Union is opposed to War.

The totalitarian dictator state cannot brook freedom of opinion. Specifically the Fascist and Nazi states have

suppressed all Freethought organisations within their frontiers. The World Union is, therefore, the enemy of totalitarianism.

The Congresses organised by the Union have had the active support of men such as Ludwig Buechner, Ernst Haeckel, Marcelin Berthelot, Cesare Lombroso, Sergi, Hector Denis, Aristide Briand, Nicolas Salmeron (President of the Spanish Republic of 1873), President Braga, President Arriaga, President Masaryk, President Benes, Herbert Spencer, and Henry Maudsley, as well as of Moncure Conway, Charles Bradlaugh, John M. Robertson, and Mrs. Besant.

It is to be noted, in view of the outrageous attacks recently made on the Union, that it has always proclaimed the right of the individual to worship or not as he pleases, and that, at the Prague Congress, 1936, a protest was passed, condemning the persecution of Protestants and Catholics in Germany.

The International Congress will be held next September 9-13, at the Conway Hall, London, by joint invitation of the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association, the South Place Ethical Society, and the Union of Ethical Societies. It is organised and financed entirely by the inviting societies.

The official reply of the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare to Captain A.H.M. Ramsey, M.P. regarding the holding of the Congress, was published in the **Bombay Sentinel** of 23rd June last. In writing that miserable letter Sir Samuel Hoare had the misfortune to fall into the ink-pot of Mr. Chapman Cohen and received a very well deserved treatment.

Mr. Cohen writes in the **Freethinker**, "As Home Secretary his reply might have been, and I think should have been short and precise. He should have informed these ignorant and bigoted members of the 'seventy' that English citizens have the right to discuss any

subject they chose; that it was not even his business, as Home Secretary, to express an opinion as to the value of these discussions and that any attempt to interfere with the right of public meeting would be sharply dealt with. . . . Instead of this the Home Secretary says that he "strongly deplores" the holding of the Congress of the World Union of Free-thinkers, that he is "in the fullest sympathy with the feelings" that have prompted the petition and really regrets that he can do nothing. If that is not encouragement of religious intolerance what is it? . . . "We have in this country a long and cherished tradition of liberty and toleration," but Sir Samuel Hoare is in "fullest sympathy" with the feelings of those who would suppress by force those who exercise this freedom."

The point was also taken up by Mr. Ernest Thurtle, M.P. (Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of London) in a letter to the London **Times**.

A. S.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Editor : Prof. R. D. Karve M. A.

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country."

Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.

No. 1

DECEMBER 1, 1938.

One Anna

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THE REGULATION OF SEX

By

R. D. KARVE

There is hardly any subject in which irrationalism finds greater scope than in sex matters. For most people, and even so-called rationalists are found amongst these, morality is synonymous with the strict observance of the sex restrictions which may be prevalent at the moment in any given community. Most people consider it highly desirable that there should be such restrictions, and the stricter they are, the better. Some will even go so far as to judge the ethical level of a community by gauging the number of 'contacts' per night in that community. They will point out that some such restrictions are found **even** among the lower animals, and so man must necessarily have them. In spite of this, they are ready to call a man a brute if he does not observe current restrictions.

To such people, it may seem a sacrilege even to ask the question, "Is there anything moral about sex restrictions?" If we define morality as something tending to public good, we find

that in most cases, sex restrictions are highly immoral. A little study will show that these restrictions differ widely in different communities, so much so that the sex rules of one community are considered highly immoral by other communities. We find communities which give complete sex liberty to girls before marriage, but enforce strict monogamy afterwards. On the other hand, we find communities in which girls are kept under strict surveillance before marriage, but are allowed considerable liberty after marriage. We find communities in which girls can earn their dowry or pay their parents' debts by prostituting themselves before marriage and can still marry and become faithful wives later on. In the face of such contradictions, who can say that one set of regulations is moral and the other immoral, since the communities mentioned show no signs of going to the dogs on that account? The idea of morality is simply a label attached to the regulations current in any community, and anything different is dubbed immoral. Really speaking morality has nothing to do with it, if indeed an analysis does not show that these regulations are immoral, in that they are unjust to certain members of the community.

Prostitution is universally proclaimed to be a curse. If that is so, it is a very strong argument against any form of sex regulation, since prostitution can be easily shown to be the direct outcome of restrictions on sex relations. But superficial moralists will still try to cure the evil without considering the

root cause. They are even afraid to face the idea that prostitution can be due to the highly "moral" institution of marriage. Naturally such efforts are

doomed to failure from the start. Prostitution has practically disappeared in Soviet Russia simply because sex restrictions have been slackened. If ever they are re-imposed, prostitution is bound to flourish again.

It is easy to see that sex regulations do not originate from moral motives at all. Their origin lies partly in ancient superstitions and partly in the conception of woman as property, in the same way as a dog is considered property, the only difference being that a wife is considered a much more precious piece of property, so that a man who would not mind a friend petting his dog would certainly not allow the same liberty to be taken with his wife, irrespective of the wishes of the wife in question. People who do not like this point of view often claim that this feeling of property is reciprocal and that a wife has as much right to object to the husband's being lax in "sex morals". As it is practically impossible however to impose severe restrictions on the man, the woman is usually the only victim of these and the reciprocity is only an argument.

It is therefore highly gratifying to see that some attempt is being made to mitigate the evils of orthodox Hindu marriage laws by making it possible for the wife to ask for a divorce under certain circumstances. There is no doubt that Dr. Deshmukh's bill leaves much to be desired, but it must also be remembered that orthodoxy is almost always in the majority and that to get any law reform carried out by any legislative body, considerable concessions have to be made to opponents in the case of bills not sponsored by Government who can command an obedient majority. This bill only mentions three causes of divorce: (1) A change of religion by the husband, (2) Desertion for a period of three years, and (3) marrying another wife. Dr. Deshmukh has entirely ignored the bill put forward by one of his colleagues to prevent polygamy by the man, and perhaps he was right, as there was no knowing if that

bill would be passed. We shall consider that bill in a moment, but with regard to the Divorce bill, it is evident that it should have included at least some more grounds for divorce, cruelty, for instance. As it is, most women are dependent on their husbands for their living and would never even consider the possibility of obtaining a divorce, unless they had already in view some one who would marry them afterwards. For such women, the law will remain a dead letter, because it makes no provision for maintenance of the divorced woman. This is an important defect, but Dr. Deshmukh has thought fit to ignore advice on this point, thinking perhaps that it may be easier to get the bill passed if there is no maintenance clause.

A change of religion is very easy and may serve the need of a married couple who want to separate by mutual consent, which is otherwise not permissible. Religion can be changed back again after divorce if thought desirable. This is now fairly easy. This purpose may also be served by a pretence of desertion for three years when both persons want a divorce. These subterfuges are a matter of course in all countries where the divorce law is not rational. Divorce by mutual consent is a very important case for divorce, which is usually not recognized, because orthodoxy believes that you should not be allowed to do what you please, but should be forced to do things you do not like. So if at least one of the parties does not want the divorce, it may be given, because in that case the result is unpleasant to at least one party. The principal business of the law is to be unpleasant at least to one party if not both.

Further, divorce by mutual consent really means divorce on the demand of either party, because if the other party is not willing, it can be pestered into willingness. But it is taken for granted that sex should be full of restrictions and any pleasure obtained from it must be at the cost of as much inconvenience as possible.

As regards the enforced monogamy which some women would like to

impose on men, it may be pointed out that nowhere in the world has law succeeded in making man monogamous. If legal marriage is not allowed, there are always so-called illegitimate relations, or in the last resort, prostitutes, open or clandestine. Europe apparently prefers the monogamic pretence, with clandestine relations freely indulged in by men, and perhaps less freely by women. That Europe is politically dominant to-day does not in the least prove that this system has any inherent merits. But some of our ladies seem to be influenced by European ideas, which Europeans naturally consider more moral than any others, and are trying to make Hindu men monogamous by law, with the inevitable consequence that the woman who cannot marry them will remain as their mistresses. What these ultra-moral ladies gain by making the position of some of their friends legally insecure, except the kudos of so called marriage reform, is difficult to understand. As it is, one sees even educated ladies staying with men as their mistresses because they cannot marry those men for some reason or other. The same thing is bound to happen on a large scale if such a law is passed. Dr. Deshmukh's bill affords adequate relief to those women who, for their dignity or any other reason, will not suffer a legitimate rival. But such women will never be able to avoid illegitimate rivals. Minds cannot be bound down by law, and such laws only create a tendency to break the spirit of the law if not the letter. When will people become more sensible and leave these private affairs to individual choice?

A PLEA FOR AN ELEMENT OF RATIONALISM IN RELIGION

BY J. B. PETIT

Besides their other attributes, all religions are at bottom, the quintessence of the reflections and efforts of their founders to explain "the why and wherefore of life" and to prescribe certain rules of conduct for the happiness and progress of their followers.

Having been preached at widely different and therefore necessarily divergent stages of the human evolution, often divided by centuries, and with special reference to the people of the areas for whose immediate needs and benefit they were primarily intended, all systems have naturally begun by purifying and elevating the conditions that then prevailed; and must accordingly be judged in the light of that back-ground and its surroundings in order to facilitate a proper understanding not only of the merits but also of the scope, the significance and even the limitations of their respective doctrines.

This is a factor of supreme importance common to all the religions of the world, although almost all of them, owing largely to the highly developed and compelling personalities of their founders and also in some cases, the universality of many of their doctrines, seem to have ultimately become great world-forces, and exercised for varying periods of time, far wider influence on humanity than even their teachings warranted.

There is thus hardly a religion which has not been influenced in some measure, not only by the beliefs and doctrines, but also in a few cases even by the errors and misconceptions of an earlier system, and which has not at the same time, substantially improved upon the conditions obtaining at the period, generally in the one immediately preceding it. Some of them have indeed even openly acknowledged such indebtedness in terms of appreciation and gratitude.

For the sake of elucidation, every religion may be conveniently divided into two broad sections; viz. the 'esoteric,' suited only to the initiated, which may be called the 'inner circle'; and the 'exoteric', to the populace, which may be called the 'outer circle'. Ordinarily, the former, comprising the rituals and specific teachings of a system, is meant mainly for its adherents; whereas the latter appertains to the rest of the world and consists usually of ethical and philosophical truths of a perpetual character, which have always belonged

to mankind and constitute the common heritage of humanity.

Naturally therefore, there is much in common between the exoteric sections of the different systems, but considerable difference between their respective esoteric counterparts. The latter also suffer in almost all cases from the introduction therein, generally after the disappearance of their founders, of irrelevant extraneous matters, mainly consisting of elaborate rituals, and sometimes even of strange dogmas and inexplicable customs, emanating largely from their immediate disciples and later adherents, which have all accumulated through the ages into an incongruous mass of heterogeneous superstitions, often incompatible with reason and invariably antagonistic to the purer teachings of the original founders.

For this degeneration and debasement, born partly out of ignorance and partly out of perversity, the priestly classes, and their perpetual and inveterate allies, the blind and unreasoning advocates of orthodoxy, are almost entirely to blame. They it is who have, throughout the history of mankind, generally hampered the development of science, stemmed the tide of reform, held up the wheels of progress, impeded the course of civilization, and otherwise inflicted the most cruel wrongs on humanity at every stage of its existence in the name of God and religion.

Mankind has tamely submitted in silence and awe from times immemorial to such wanton abuse of power and such continued tyranny, largely because religion is concerned with assertions which are admittedly incapable of proof, such as the existence and nature of God, our inability to know His will, and so on and so forth.

Those who have possessed and used or rather misused this power, either for advancing their own personal aggrandizement or for installing themselves as God Almighty's representatives on earth, have never scrupled to invoke the authority even of the great religions them-

selves in support of their preposterous claims, although it must always remain a mystery to all thinking beings why of all persons in the world they alone should have been chosen as the sole custodians of divine wisdom.

The Popes of Christendom in Europe, the Brahmins of Hinduism in India, and their prototypes throughout the world, have thus completely succeeded in imposing in the name of religion and God a dictatorship over the bulk of mankind which has practically atrophied their reasoning faculties and entirely deprived them of all freedom of thought and liberty of action.

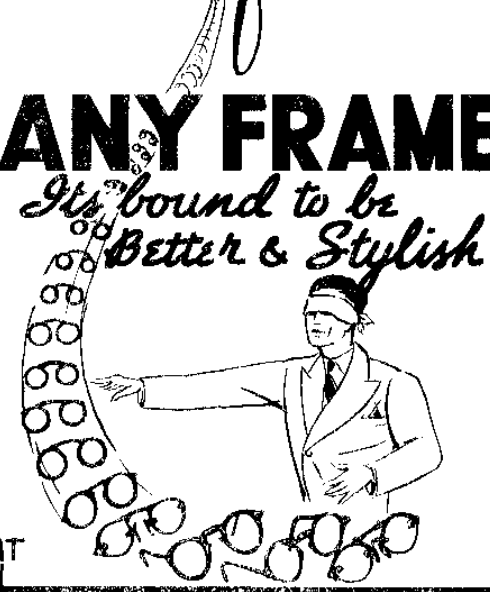
Such an attitude of mind even in those who are fervent believers in their respective faiths, is contrary also to the teachings of their own prophets, almost all of whom have invariably insisted upon convincing before converting an individual, and thus put a high value

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upon the necessity of understanding a doctrine before accepting it.

But such has been the unthinking attitude of humanity on religion for centuries, that for the generality of mankind, it is a crime to raise doubts or call for proofs, or even to ask questions, much less to inquire if certain religious beliefs, teachings and ceremonies are consistent with the dictates of reason or the discoveries of science.

While mere ritualism has thus invariably alienated the intelligent and cultured classes of the followers of all religions, it has simultaneously produced in the bigoted and unthinking sections thereof, the reactions described above, with the result that in their zeal to observe the glittering forms of ceremonies and to pursue the glorified phantoms of dogmas, they have lost sight even of the great fundamentals and eternal truths.

(To be Concluded)

AN APPRECIATION

Dear Mr. Karve,

I write to congratulate you on your fine article reviewing Dr. Har Dayal's "Twelve Religions and Modern life". That is one of the finest articles I have read and I only wish that I could reprint it in full.

But I am afraid that the Rationalism in this country has not developed sufficiently beyond the old, conventional ideas of morality for that and if I were to publish an article along similar lines we would probably lose half our members; these useful words, illegitimacy and adultery still have their hold, even on self-styled Rationalists.

The trouble with free-thought as with every other philosophy that attracts a relatively large number of people is that among them there are so many who will not go further than half way. There are still many subjects on which the great majority are still content to

accept without question the old ideas. Recently there was a great row in this country because a woman politician said that under a Socialist administration all the children would be illegitimate. If there was one person in the country who did not consider such would be a shameful thing, well they were not heard. That apart from the fact that if all were illegitimate, they would automatically be legitimate. That is not perhaps put as clearly as it might be, but you get my meaning. But the general attack on the woman was that she had insulted the Socialists.

Last night we had one of our Open Forum meetings and in the course of a discussion on birth control the customary argument was produced; the only reason for limitation of families is economic. I have never been able to understand how proponents of that theory square it with the fact that the more secure one's position the smaller the family, and vice versa. Yet any five minutes stroll through the socially desirable suburb, and the slums of this city, should have made it evident to any one. Further some form of birth control has been practised almost from the first man. One hates to think of the size of families if every intercourse had had its natural result in a child. But there you are, people who claim to be advanced accept so many old beliefs or no belief at all but leave the matter untouched and ultimately subscribe to the conventional ideas through sheer intellectual indifference and laziness.

There are times when the task seems hopeless. Last week when we brought out our journal "The Truth-seeker" and I sent copies out to our agent, I was surprised to receive a refusal from one of our members who manages

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a book-shop. This member a young lady who is a professed communist and generally sets out to be very rational and considered in her judgments was inexpressibly shocked at an article on the Bourne Abortion case of England, with which you will be acquainted. She thought it a most shocking thing that we should suggest that in certain circumstances induced abortion should be desirable. Generally there are many otherwise intelligent people who shy right off at the mention of any thing in connection with the sexual life. As you said in your article "sex is dirty" to them. It seems to me that the most pressing need is for a general psychoanalysis and a compulsory attendance to hear the verdict. If people had any conception of how much their lives are guided by the inextricable welter of repressions, inhibitions and unrecognised superstitions, they would welcome such action as the only means by which they could understand what is wrong with them, and with the world in general. As for the general attitude towards woman, well, a leading school teacher (a woman) in this city said last week that woman had now achieved a full equality with man. And the probability is that she believes it and that 999 women out of a 1000 would agree with her without reservations.

Oh, well, all we can do is keep hammering away at them I suppose. Perhaps one of these days there will be a general awakening. I must confess that I am not very optimistic of that, but by trying to drive it in at every opportunity we may get somewhere sooner than we expect.

Best wishes to your Association and to yourself personally,

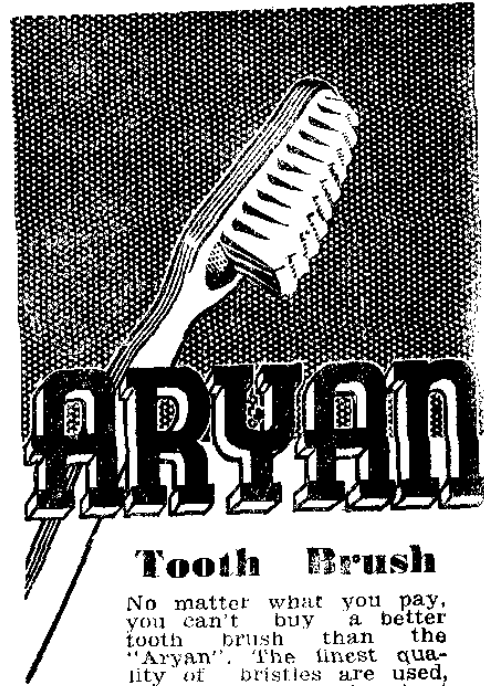
May Rationalist influence increase in your country in proportion to the need.

Fraternally yours

GORDON F. INGHAN

Editor

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REASON

(Estd. 1931)

The Journal of The Rationalist
Association of India
5-12, Queen's Road,
Bombay.

Editor:

Prof. R. D. Karve, M. A.

Diplome d'Etudes Superieures (Paris).

Asstt. Editor:

Abraham Solomon

The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates etc. should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmani Building, Arthur Road, Bombay 11.

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All cheques, Money Orders, or Postal Orders should be made payable to the Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND NEWS

We are sure our readers will note with pleasure that we have embarked on a new venture by making "Reason" a fortnightly. Though very modest in appearance we hope to add more pages and enlarge the size as funds permit.

The Return of "Ali Akbar"

Many of our readers will remember the trenchant notes and comments which used to appear in this journal under the caption "By the Wayside" by Ali Akbar, and will be pleased to know that they will appear again from next issue.

The International Freethought Congress was, as expected, a complete success. The papers which had given so much publicity to the agitation against it did not publish a single line about it when it was held, although some of the

world's most eminent thinkers and scientists attended it.

The despicable action of some fascist-christians at the tomb of that great freethinker, Charles Bradlaugh, fills our mind with disgust. When the Congress Party (about 70 in number) visited the tomb, they found that the bronze bust of Bradlaugh had been removed from its pedestal and an anti-Semitic notice, couched in the most offensive terms had been attached to the monument. The action of these inhuman humans is we think truly representative of their culture. All decent-minded persons, including believers we hope, will voice their indignation at this outrage.

We have received a few inquiries from members outside Bombay regarding freethought literature. Books on Freethought and cognate subjects can be obtained through us. A list of books will be sent to those desirous of having it.

The second edition of **Materialism Restated** by Chapman Cohen has been published and we are receiving a few copies for sale. The whole work has been overhauled and about 100 extra pages added. We cannot too strongly recommend this work; it is written with a clarity for which Mr. Cohen is well known. It will prove very useful as a gift to religious friends and will dispel much prevalent misconception of the subject. The price is Rs. 2/8-. Postage four annas.

We offer our grateful thanks to the following for their help to the "best of causes".

J. B. H. Wadia, Bombay Rs. 30;
Dr. Har Dayal, England £ 1; Nur Jehan
Azad, Hollywood, California \$ 3.50.

Membership subscriptions:—

G. B. Singh, Lahore, Rs. 5; D. S. Erulkar, London, Rs. 5; Aziz T. Nakhoda, Surat, Rs. 5 and M. F. M. Philips, Africa, Rs. 5.

A. S.

REVIEWS

SEXOLOGY OF THE HINDUS—by Chandra Chakrabarty Vijaya Krishna Brothers, 31, Vivekananda Road, Calcutta. PP. 125, Re. 1.

In spite of the title of this book, it is not entirely confined to Hindu sexological lore, but contains numerous references to sex life all over the world, ancient and modern. The notes in small type at the bottom constitute perhaps half the book and contain numerous quotations from Sanscrit authors, as well as other information. In fact the author seems to have a knack of collecting information, but there is hardly any evidence of deep study. The English is not always correct, and the author seems to have some difficulty in adopting a scientific attitude. The chapter on abstinence, for instance, might have been written by any traditionalist. The modern view is that abstinence, beyond a certain limit is physiologically harmful and leads to impotence in the end. In fact, intercourse within limits helps to maintain health. The author does not seem to have heard of this view. The book is packed with interesting information, though the author's views are worth nothing from the modern point of view.

R. D. K.

TWILIGHT IN INDIA—by M. V. V. K. Rangachari, Cocanada.

The booklet is divided into three chapters. As the author says in the Preface, "The first chapter (Vishnu) deals with the background of Indian life, in the religious setting.... The second (Brahma) outlines the social picture, while the light and shade, the real flesh and blood, are furnished by the political and economic disclosures made in the third." The author sums up Indian progress from the times of Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhwa, and considers the changes brought about by Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, etc. up to Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and even Dr. Deshmukh, Dr. Paranjpye and Dr. Avoine on the Rationalist side, and then considers the present political situation.

R. D. K.

THE OUTLINE OF RATIONALISM—by Chandra Chakrabarty Vijaya Krishna Brothers, 31 Vivekananda Road, Calcutta, PP. 132 Re. 1.

The author thinks it necessary to trace whole course of evolution: evolution of the elements, evolution of the earth, evolution of life, evolution of man, primitive races, etc. and only in the last chapter (14 pages out of the

132) does one find out why this book is called the Outline of Rationalism. But even there he speaks of the temperature of Saturn and the density of Venus. The heading of the chapter is "Freedom of the Mind", but only in the last four or five pages is there any reference to modern ideas about religion, soul and God! The point of all this apparently is that there can be no soul apart from the body and so "all religions loose their *raison-d'être* of existence" (sic).

The author's remarks in some places in the book are not however always rational. For instance, he says that the slitting of the urethral canal of boys is practised by some tribes for preserving their chastity. It can really have no such effect and is merely done to reduce the chances of conception. He thinks also that chastity "until marriage is not only a virtue, but also a necessity for physical growth....", which is utter nonsense, since marriage is not a natural event happening at a certain age or a certain period of growth. One wonders how many readers will have the patience to read the book to the end to find out where the rationalism in it is.

R. D. K.

L'ETOILE RATIONALISTE, Organe de l'Union Mondiale des Libres Penseurs. (Organ of the World Union of Freethinkers).

This journal is published in French, English, German and Dutch. The issues received so far contain papers, in all the four languages, by eminent freethinkers, and reports on the situation of Freethought in different countries of the world, which were read at the 25th International Congress of Freethinkers held in London in September last. Those who wish to keep in touch with the Freethought movement in different parts of the world will find it very useful. The subscription is 12 frs. (about Re. 1,-) per year, and it is issued from Brussels by Dr. Modeste Targuier, President of the World Union of Freethinkers, (47, Rue de l'Ecuyer, Brussels, Belgium).

A. S.

Also Received.

The Bible Examined. By A Hindu. (The Book Company, Ltd., Calcutta), 112 pp.; Eight Annas.

The Churches and their Politics. By Allan Flanders (International Publishing Company, London, W.C. 1), 23 pp.; Three Pence.

REASON



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GOD, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION

By R. D. KARVE

The tendency of mystic minds to confound these three is well illustrated by the Review of Philosophy & Religion, of which we have received the September issue (Vol. seven, No. 1). It bears the sub-title "An international and non-sectarian Journal", and there is nothing to show at what intervals it is published (The Ananda Publishing House, 3-A Lowther Road, Allahabad). It is published under the auspices of The Academy of Philosophy & Religion, with an editorial board of five, of which Sri Krishna Prem, M.A. (Cantab) and R. N. Kaul, M.A. LL.B., B.Litt. (Oxon) are called Editors. The editorial bias is indicated by the aims and objects of the above academy. "1. The aim of the Academy is to bring together all those who are interested in Philosophical investigation of the problem of God." This contains the unwarranted assumption of the existence of God. Really speaking, neither religion nor philosophy has any need for God. Buddhism can get on quite well without a God and its popularity shows that even religious thought does not need God. Since philosophy deals with the general laws of knowledge, it has not necessarily anything to do with God, at least until the existence of God is proved. One of the writers in this journal himself cites Bertrand Russe, as one of the exponents of modern philosophy and it is well-known that he is an atheist.

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Prof. S. K. Maitra contributes an article on the "Nature of Truth", explaining that three views can be taken of truth: viz. something that exists, something that is coherent, and something that has value. Then he says, "In the language of the Vedanta philosophy, we may say that Truth is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Sat representing the existential dimension, Chit the dimension in reason, and Ananda the dimension in value. The whole standpoint which looks upon Truth as Sat-Chit-Ananda we may call the standpoint of Truth as value." This is hardly an example of lucid writing. Ananda by itself is the dimension in value and Sat-Chit-Ananda is also the stand-point of value. What has become of the others?

He says further that Value cannot be defined except in terms of itself. "Muensterberg started by defining value as satisfaction. That of course means that value is value, and there ends the whole matter." Muensterberg apparently also made the mistake of asking "Whose satisfaction?" But according to Prof. Maitra this question is irrelevant so far as value is concerned and it is better not to ask it. Philosophers can apparently make sense out of this, at least Prof. Maitra's brand of philosophers. In that case, I prefer not to belong to that brand. Value and satisfaction have no meaning unless they refer to some person or other, since one man's food may easily be another man's poison. Prof. Maitra thinks that it does not at all matter that value is indefinable, or that it does not refer to anybody in particular. It is just "value", in the abstract! Well, philosophy is a hard subject.

Then there is the article by Sri Krishna Prem on the "Search for Truth". First he warns people against believing everything written in books, as the same writing may mean different things to different persons, and then he asks people to trust to "inner reason". He considers the necessity of "gurus" and says "The Guru is the pure Consciousness itself dwelling in the heart of every living being and particularly that Light as reflected in the Sattvic buddhi, the power that gives us certain knowledge beyond all

doubts and hesitations of the mind. That Light dwells in all beings...." After warning us against books, what is the use of asking readers to believe this on trust? What other evidence is there for it? The scientific world is agreed that when one man says that he sees something which is not visible to any others, that man is probably under a delusion. If there is inner light which is infallible, why are differences of opinion found among the foremost thinkers of the world? Even if scientific thinkers be discredited among the spiritually-minded, are these at least agreed among themselves? Nothing can be further from the truth. Why else are there so many different religions, whose founders invariably lay claim to this same inner, infallible knowledge? Why so many schisms in the same religion? Simply because each founder considers himself the possessor of inner light. No scientist will accept any such evidence of truth. This writer excels in making dogmatic statements which are very amusing even if they are absurd. Thus 'If however we will bend our efforts towards controlling the senses by the mind and listening in the mind for the Voice which comes from beyond, it is perfectly certain that, as soon as an outer guru is necessary, that guru will appear. That is as certain as that, if three lines be joined to form a triangle, the enclosed angles will be equal to two right angles. As an ancient saying has it, "when the chela is ready, the guru appears"'. Comment is hardly necessary. And such writers claim to be in possession of the highest truth!

All the contributors to this magazine show a marked tendency towards mysticism, or misty thought. They are no doubt selected on that ground, because the Editors state in their "Editorial": "We hope in this Review to do something to close the chasm which at present is widening between Religion and Philosophy." They have even secured the blessing of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, the well-known exponent and champion of Indian mysticism, though perhaps he does not give it that name. His own writings are full of it and will not bear analysis. But Dr. P. T. Raju, in an article

the "Philosophy of the Present", deprecates the tendency to analyse things, because "Our analytical understanding tends to explain away the ideal." Analysis will naturally tend to destroy all the mists that go to make mysticism. The etymology of these words is not the same, but that is a

The editors quote Whitehead as saying that "the whole of European Philosophy may be described as a series of footnotes to Plato", a remark which shows, according to them, how true and lasting was the latter's philosophic thought. On the other hand, "such men as Plato and Plotinus were not ashamed to speak of the Gods". Is any further proof required of the existence of Gods (in the plural)? That anybody who claims to be a philosopher should bring forward such childish arguments will surprise no one who has seen the results of spiritualism. To the rationalist, this kind of writing will always be amusing, if not very convincing.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE WORLD UNION OF FREETHINKERS

Brief Report

Condensed from the report appearing in the *Literary Guide* of October 1938.

The 25th International Freethought Congress held last September in London was, as expected, a complete success. The papers which gave so much publicity to the agitation carried on against its being held, did not publish a single line about it although some of the most eminent thinkers and scientists from different parts of the world attended it.

The countries represented included the United States, England, Scotland, Holland, France, Belgium, South Africa, West Africa, India, Hongkong, China, Sweden, Spain, Czechoslovakia and some others.

It is impossible to do justice in a brief report to the brilliant speeches delivered or read at the Congress, most of which have been published in *L'Etoile Rationaliste*, the official organ of the World Union.

Among the distinguished speakers were Prof. J.B.S. Haldane, Prof. H. Levy, M. Andre Lorulot (France), M. Renand Strivay (Belgium), Prof. V. Gordon Childe, Mr. Allan Flanders, Prof. Lancelot Hogben, Captain E. Voska (Czecho-Slovakia), Mr. G. D. H. Cole, Mr. John Langden-Davies, Dr. Modeste Terwagne (the President of the World Union), Mr. Joseph McCabe, Mr. Chapman Cohen, Dr. Har Dayal and others.

The speeches of Mr. B. Zavadovsky (U.S.S.R.), Prof. J. H. Leuba (U.S.A.), Mr. Vivian Phelips (South Africa) and others who could not attend the Congress, were read.

The subjects discussed at the sessions were:—"The Present Religious Reaction and the Menace of the Vatican", "Youth, the Schools and Freethought", "Science and the Churches" and "The Reality of a Secular Ethic".

Resolutions were passed unanimously expressing sympathy and solidarity with the democratic forces in Spain and Czecho-Slovakia and assuring the oppressed minorities in dictatorial States of the heart-felt sympathy of Freethinkers.

The demonstration at the Scala Theatre where the subject was "Free-thought and the Struggle for Peace and Liberty" was a great success. Mr. Chapman Cohen — whose fifty years' service in the cause of Freethought is truly remarkable — presided. Dealing with the general question of the struggle for freedom, Mr. Cohen emphasized the fact that sacrifice was necessary on the part of those who really cared, since the great majority were content to be led by a few. The lot of the pioneers was always a hard one, but it was far better to be in front with the few than behind with the crowd.

Prof. Lancelot Hogben then discussed the question of freedom from the standpoint of the scientist who desired to carry on his work of research unfettered by ecclesiastical or other restrictions. It was not enough to be tolerant. A broad mind was a heavy price to pay for an empty head. Totalitarianism was a product of despair, and the most effec-

tive way of countering it was to make available to the people as a whole the great social improvements which scientific advance had made possible; to give them, in fact, a system worth defending.

The next speaker, Captain Voska, drew attention to the fact that his country had been deliberately created twenty years ago by the great Powers—including Great Britain, France and the United States—as a buffer state. For many years Czecho-Slovaks, Germans, and other nationalities, had been living in peace, and it was not until outside propaganda had stirred up the Sudeten Germans that the difficulties had arisen.

Captain Voska was followed by a fellow delegate who was a Sudeten German. The speaker explained to the meeting how the peace of the country was disturbed from outside. He went on to say that the suggestion that all Germans in Czecho-Slovakia were behind the Hitler party was false.

Mr. G.D.H. Cole followed. He declared that he was not very interested in the Freethought Movement in so far as it concerned merely fighting religion, but he was interested in its wider aspects. In the course of his historical studies he had been impressed by the fact that the real pioneers in the Freethought Movement, like Richard Carlisle, Robert Owen, and later Charles Bradlaugh, had sought to make their belief in freedom more comprehensive by linking it up with a demand for better social conditions. In his view such a combination was very necessary to-day. He agreed with Prof. Hogben that the best way of arousing people to fight against the threatening danger of Dictatorship was to hold out to them a prospect of a better condition of life. In his view what believers in freedom should aim at now was a radical, hopeful philosophy covering the whole field of life.

Next came the representative from Spain. The speaker declared that Spanish Freethinkers wished that all should enjoy freedom of opinion and expression, and the new Republican constitution made provision for such liberty of conscience. Unhappily, this was one of the reasons which brought about a revolution, for

old imperial Spain, in conjunction with the Catholic Church, was utterly opposed to this idea of freedom. The Spanish Government was not opposed to religion but wished religious organisations would not interfere with politics.

Mr. John Langdon-Davies spoke next. In his view, in a successful struggle for freedom, it was essential that freedom of thought should be combined with intelligent action. In the tragic events which were taking place in Spain, of which he had first-hand knowledge, there was striking evidence of the evil, hypocritical part which was played in human affairs by organised religion. Organised religion had become a part of the forces of reaction, and it was necessary to fight against it.

The last function was the Dinner of the World Union of Freethinkers. Mr. Chapman Cohen, President of the National Secular Society, was in the chair. Dr. C. E. M. Joad proposed the toast of "Freethought". Dr. Joad said he did not think we always appreciated as we should the degree of liberty we enjoyed. We were living in difficult times and it seemed that the Almighty State

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had become a greater menace to liberty than the Almighty we used to hear so much about. The phenomena of dictatorship must be alien to Freethinkers, for clear, free, independent thought was the quintessence of human life. In the end truth would always eat the heart out of any false loyalty.

The Chairman himself next proposed the toast of "The Prosperity of the World Union of Freethinkers". He said that the Congress which had just come to an end was one of the most noteworthy in the history of such assemblies. There were those who did not seem to understand the real meaning of Freethought. It was by no means merely anti-religious propaganda; it was something much wider and more significant than that, touching life on every side. Freedom was to-day temporarily suppressed in some parts of the world, but let them not fear that it would not rise again. Tyranny inevitably carried with it the seed of its own destruction.

The toast was responded to by Dr. M. Tarwagne, the President of the World Union. He said that the aims and objects of the Union embraced the highest moral values. Summed up in one word, they stood for the happiness of mankind. It was the duty of all to strive for social justice in the economic and political field as well as for intellectual liberty. There was great need for clear thinking and for courage in acting. In the name of the World Union, he greeted all the democratic countries in the world, especially those whose liberties are threatened.

Mr. H. G. Wells spoke next. He said, in connection with the international crisis, British Freethinkers ought not, in criticizing other peoples as enemies of freedom, to overlook the shortcomings of the British Empire. Mr. Wells referred in particular to the suppression of freedom of speech in India and to the treatment of the native races in Africa.

The other speakers who followed were Mr. Joseph McCabe who proposed the toast "To our Friends from Abroad". M. Lorulot, who responded on behalf of France, Dr. L. Milde for Czecho-Slova-

kia, and Mlle. Pardon, the Secretary of the World Union.

* * * *

A customary part of the International Freethought Congresses is a visit to some place or monument which recalls a memory important to Freethinkers. About seventy delegates went to Brookwood where they assembled at Charles religious fanaticism chose to show itself great leader. And it is at this place that in its true colours. When the Congress party arrived there, they found that the bronze bust of Bradlaugh had been stolen from its pedestal during the preceding night. The inhuman profaners of the tomb had left behind them a Nazi anti-Jewish poster and, a symbol of their kind, a chamber pot. To such action have our opponents been reduced. Freethought and Bradlaugh cannot be affected by the cowardly insults of such despicable creatures. They only serve to show to what depths of degradation religious bigotry can sink.

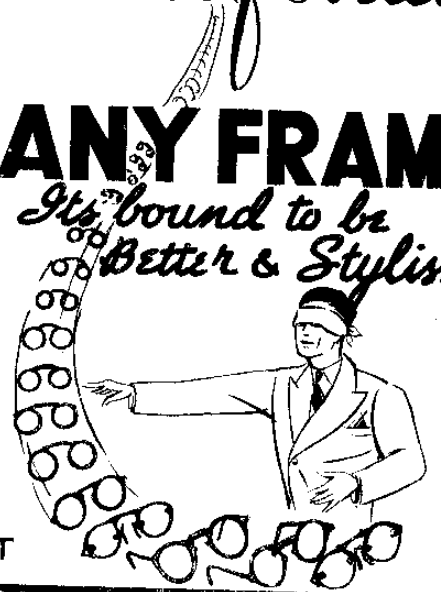
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BY THE WAYSIDE.

By Ali Akbar

It is ages since we met. What a lot has happened during these few years! The fortunes of our Association had once sunk very low. "Reason" had to be suspended. Thanks to the energies of our enthusiastic Secretary it has been possible to revive it again. This fortnightly issue should in my mind work better. It is tiny no doubt, but it is only an infant. As it grows we trust it will increase in weight and vigour and carry out the object of the Association "to combat all religious beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason". I like that word 'combat'. Some of you may remember the famous trial where our previous editor, Dr. D'Avoine was prosecuted for wounding religious feelings. Then Mr. Eastley who was the Government prosecutor, played a great deal with that word 'combat', desiring to convey to the magistrate the aggressiveness of our Association. However Sir H. Dastur was not taken in.

Unfortunately our Association is not aggressive. This is perhaps one of the primary reasons why we are stagnant. Some-time back there was a discussion amongst a group of friends regarding means of propaganda. Discussing the value of public lectures as such a means, it was agreed that in our country it is only the politician that can command a platform. Others, unless they are well known get only a very small audience. Rationalistic propaganda couched as it has to be in correct and scientific language fails to attract the crowd because its plane of thought is above their heads. The intellectual who is angry with the dogmatism of established religion finds solace in the clear and untrammelled thought of rationalism. Some of these openly avow their rejection of old beliefs while others play for safety. Though their intellect elevates them to the skies of free-thought, their stomach keeps them down in the bog of ignorant superstition. Their very presence lends weight to their surroundings however much they may differ from it. Ignorant people look at the host of intellectuals

who follow the banner of superstition and consider the others fools.

To the bulk of humanity the stomach is the only organ that counts. If its needs are met it does not matter what else is done. For the sake of this security, people submit themselves to many things and observe many a superstitious practice. Nor are all those that despise security and ideally embrace hardships because of their principles happy for a long time. They feel that they are not wanted in many places where they would like to be. Even amongst themselves discontent is the prevailing mood. I admit that discontent is the catalyser of all progressive movements. Still it is not surprising that after years of struggle that have been filled with disappointments and disillusionment, such men lose faith in others, become cynical and quiet down. They lose their love for fight and people imagine that there is one more prodigal returned to the fold and one more defection from the rationalist camp, a defection coming on at the mature end of life though this may be very far from true.

Another type that one meets is the tolerant rationalist. He sees that religion is man-made stuff and an example of an individual's outlook on life. Because of that he will not raise his little finger when his best friend is steeped in superstition and vigorously practises it. According to him his friend is happy. So why then should he be made unhappy by unhinging him from his cherished beliefs. This is wrong again. I do not think any rationalist is unhappy because he has given up his beliefs; on the contrary, he often sits down and laughs at himself as to how stupid he has been. This tolerant gentleman goes further and would not even support an Association. This tolerance is the exact opposite of combat. By combat I do not mean that we should have recourse to breaking of heads or to administration of large doses of purgatives as the followers of Fascism did. No! we should do more propaganda and take up those superstitions which are considered sacrosanct and expose their sham, take up religious leaders who are

(Continued on page 20).

REASON

(Estd. 1931)

The Journal of The Rationalist
Association of India
5-12, Queen's Road,
Bombay.

Editor :

Prof. R. D. Karve, M. A.

Diplomed Etudes Supérieures (Paris).

Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates etc. should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmani Building, Arthur Road, Bombay II.

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NOTES AND NEWS

We are not so far aware of what the majority of our readers thought of the first fortnightly issue of this journal. But we certainly were far from satisfied with it.

Our readers will note the increased number of pages which will henceforth be twelve. We would like to know what our members and readers think of the design on the first page, and will be pleased to receive any suggestions or improvements they could offer.

The increased number of pages etc., has been possible, we must not forget to mention, because of the encouragement and support we have received from some of our members. And, if we receive support from our other members we are sure we shall be relieved of one of our greatest, if not the only worry—finance.

Militant freethought journals are, in all parts of the world, having an uphill task, and it is no matter for surprise that

it should be so in this country. That brave freethought journal of America, the New York "Truth Seeker" which was a fortnightly has now become a monthly. It is now in its 65th year of publication. For nearly 50 years it was banned in Canada. The ban had recently been removed, but unfortunately it has again been placed. But we are sure our fellow-freethinkers in America will not be deterred by this show of religious bigotry. Freethinkers are made of sterner stuff. With such men as Mr. G. E. MacDonald, that redoubtable octogenarian champion of freethought in America, Editor Charles Smith, and Mr. Woolsey Teller as Associate Editor, freethought in America is assured.

Mr. Woolsey Teller recently contributed an excellent series of articles on the "Atheism of Astronomy" rallying an enormous number of facts and figures to prove in the words of that great astronomer Lalande, "I have searched through the heavens, and nowhere have I found a trace of God."

We send our fellow-freethinkers in America our best wishes for success in their commendable efforts for the "best of causes."

A Gift from "Heaven".

It appears that some fellow rationalist has had the misfortune of landing in "Heaven". An oversight by the "recording angel" perhaps. We have received by post a donation of £1 sterling from "Heaven". The problem is how to acknowledge receipt of the same. Though we have heard of the efficiency of our local G.P.O.—which efficiency by the way does not extend beyond hunting down addressees—we do not know of any local postman or even a parson for that matter, who is in a hurry to visit that dreary place. We might have done it personally but we certainly prefer the other place where, except for the uncomfortable climate, we could have had the pleasure of meeting such men as Voltaire, Zola, Diderot, Holback, Spinoza, Paine, Ingersoll, Shelley, Bradlaugh and other stalwarts of the stormy days of old.

Well now that we have received a donation from "Heaven" there is no reason why we should not expect one, and a big one too, from "the place" I mentioned last time in my sermon".

So with grateful thanks we acknowledge:—

To Reserve Fund

From "Heaven" £1. From a sympathiser Rs. 5/-, Membership for 1939 from S. W. Willatts, Australia, Rs. 5/-. Subscription to "Reason" D. K. Pande, Allahabad Rs. 1/8. To circulating and advertising "Reason" J. Ezekiel, Bombay Re. 1/-.

Abraham Solomon.

"GREY WOLF"

The death of Kemal Ataturk, maker of Modern Turkey, known as "Grey Wolf" at Istanbul on November 10, removes a romantic figure from contemporary history. Expressions of regret and of admiration for the man came from all over the world. Born at Salonica in 1881, the son of a contractor and an Albanian mother, he was a member of the party known as the **Young Rationalist Party** of Turkey. Since 1919 he took command of the Turkish forces in Asia Minor and led the Nationalist movement, the history of Turkey has been the story of his life. In 1922 the Grand National Assembly abolished the Sultanate, and in 1923 proclaimed Turkey a Republic, with Kemal as its first President and "Chief of the State". In 1924 the Chaliphate was abolished and ruling as dictator, he turned to the secularisation of his country. Drastic changes in social life, dress, education, emancipation of women, the abolition of the "purdah", and the substitution of the Latin alphabet, transformed Turkey into an European nation.

On the day following his death Muslims in India observed "hartal", November 19 was observed as "Kemal Day" and meetings were held in his honour. We have nothing to say against these expressions of admiration for the man. But how much better it would have been if the Muslims in India had introduced at least one of the reforms which he made in Turkey; for example the

abolition of the "purdah"? It would have been a fitting tribute to the memory of one who was undoubtedly a unique personality, shall we say, because rationalism was the guiding principle of his life. A. S.

A PLEA FOR AN ELEMENT OF RATIONALISM IN RELIGION

BY J. B. PETIT

(Concluded from last Issue)

It is common knowledge that when thousands of so called pious and virtuous devotees, regularly crowd their respective places of worship and solemnly recite prayers or chant hymns on bended knees and with folded arms; or make offerings of all kinds and values, from flowers and fruits to jewels; or burn piles of sandalwood and candles and incense, by way of thanks either for boons received or to be received; or resort to the sea-side to praise or pacify the ocean; or go through their daily prayers with a piece of white linen or black crape over their foreheads, ostensibly as a mark of devotion; or solemnly slap their faces and sometimes even rub the tips of their noses with the soles of their shoes, apparently as a sign of penitence, without paying the slightest attention to the fundamental principles of their religion; they are practically hugging the shadow and shunning the substance.

There have however been periods in the history of the human race, when not only the followers but even the teachers and exponents of great religions, have come to the rescue of the world by openly sounding a note of protest, courageously expressing their dissent and freely striking out a new line of thought and conduct on a more rational basis.

Perhaps the most important of all religious beliefs is the fundamental idea of an all-powerful, all-pervading supreme being—in other words, a personal God—who is responsible for the creation of the Universe and all its wonderful manifestations. This central idea has always been put forward on the authority of religion and implicitly accepted for ages by the world as an explanation of every-

by the world as an explanation of everything human and superhuman, without a challenge.

It was given to the great world-thinker and reformer, Buddha, to disillusion mankind on the point by the foundation of his rational religion, which does not believe in a personal God, and is frankly a system of Atheism. In later times, the Reformation in England, and in more modern days, the Brahmo-Samaj in India, and similar reform movements in other parts of the world, made successful attempts to purify and reform the conditions then prevailing, by purging religion of many of its excrescences and superficialities. Still more recently, in our own generation, even great and thoughtful dignitaries of the Church like Dean Inge have themselves boldly advocated changes in the Christian doctrine in order to put it on a more rational foundation; and the yet more recent appointment of an expert-committee by no less a person than the Archbishop of Canterbury to suggest reforms in the Bible and to bring it in a line with the teachings and findings of modern science, and its report which has since been published, although it does not go far enough,—are still, all of them definite indications of the gradual but growing influence of rationalism in the domain of religion.

In a rapidly changing and intellectually expanding world, with the revolution wrought in every direction by the great discoveries and wonderful inventions of science, it is but natural that the mental vision and cultural horizon of humanity should simultaneously broaden, and the old-world ideas on religion as on everything else in life, should undergo a huge transformation.

Is there any wonder then that the educated and cultured individual of today should refuse to blindly follow the antiquated forms of religion merely in obedience to custom and tradition; and insist upon having an explanation and proof of every doctrine and fiat? Is it unnatural that he should even question the necessity of religion in order to induce him to lead a good and pure life? Is it possible to deny the force and reasonableness of his contention that if one

believes in a religion and claims to be its devoted follower, the only proper way in which he can do it, is to live it from day to day and not merely to chant parrot-like the prescribed prayers and perform the conventional ceremonies, which neither he nor even the priest can correctly comprehend or satisfactorily explain? Is it a crime in one born in, and following a particular religion to accept certain of its teachings which he can understand and appreciate, to the exclusion of others which he cannot? Is it a sin for one belonging to a particular faith even to believe in some of the teachings of another, for the simple reason that they appeal to him? Is it an offence in one to abandon the observance of forms and customs which, even if originally sanctioned by religion and useful at the time of their introduction, have since ceased to be so? Is it disrespectful for one to submit the beliefs and practices of any religion to the test of reason and the logic of facts? Is it



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the part of wisdom to condemn such an attitude of mind in the name of religion and God, when the founders of all the faith were themselves great reformers? Is it reasonable to expect doctrines and customs, propounded ages ago and suited to the development of the human mind of those times, to coincide with the wonderful achievements of science and the other advanced conditions of today? Is it then wrong for one to endeavour to substitute the latter in place of the former and bring them nearer to the realities of life and the actualities of human evolution?

The exponents of nearly all religions claim that they are the only true and authentic media of God's message to humanity; and are therefore the embodiment of perfection and wisdom in life. If that were so, they must all at the same time be correct and infallible and divine, or in short, the last word in religion. But if not, some might be correct and others wrong, unless they were all complements of each other, or

were mutually exclusive in every respect, which they are not. Among many important and cogent reasons, this fact alone ought to be enough to convince one of the fallacy of the dictum that religion is the final judgment on everything human and superhuman; and that there is no further scope or room for progress and reform in any direction.

Assuming for argument's sake, that a religion of some sort, even if imperfect, is essential for the average human being to guide and lead him into a correct mode of life, which he would not otherwise be able to adopt but for its injunctions, it is impossible that religion as it is constituted, understood and practised at present, can hold its own for long and command the respect and adherence of thinking humanity, without the regular and continued transfusion into it of an element of ready open-mindedness, intellectual growth and enlightened progress; or in plain words, a spirit of rationalism.

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ACID DROPS.

On November 9, Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at the Lord Mayor's banquet, said that we could all settle down to a peaceful and happy Christmas. This peaceful and happy time was made possible by the semi-secret agreement with Hitler at Munich. It depended also upon Mr. Chamberlain's child-like confidence in Hitler's honesty, truthfulness, and a genuine desire for a real peace. But less than forty-eight hours after the delivery of Mr. Chamberlain's praise of his own efforts, Hitler and his mob crossed the t's and dotted the i's of the Guildhall speech. And the annotation is such that it has roused a cry of horror throughout the civilized world—we except some of the members of the Cabinet, the German-fed British Fascists, and similar products of decadence. Their anxiety to keep some form of Fascism in existence is plain to all impartial observers.

Consider the situation. A Jewish lad of 17, driven desperate by the ill-treatment of his parents by the Nazis, shot and killed, in Paris, a German official. Before the death of the official the Hitler gang publicly proclaimed that, should the man die reprisals would be made upon the whole of the 600,000 Jews in Germany. The official died and the German Government kept its promise in the only direction in which one may count on it doing so—by an exhibition of a planned robbery, outrage, and arson such as the modern world has never before seen. The accounts in the newspapers, not by any means exhaustive in their scope—we except such papers as the Evening News, the Sunday Dispatch, the Daily Mail, the Observer, and other supporters of Fascism, which have been strikingly subdued in their comments on the outrage—have made known what has occurred. 600,000 Jews have had their homes invaded, their shops looted, some beaten to death, many thousands carted off to prisons, large numbers have simply "disappeared," and in one day in Vienna, 20 Jews committed suicide.

One need not pile up the horrors. The "Pogrom" was carefully arranged. One of the Nazi gang of degenerators, Goebbels, has denied that the outrage was more than the spontaneous indignation of the mob—his own words were "justifiable and righteous indignation of the German people." "Spontaneous," when reprisals were threatened before the official died. When the sadistic orgy of brutality and robbery broke out in most of the towns of Germany at the same hour, were conducted in the same way at every place, with the police standing by watching the riot of robbery and ill-treatment, and when Hitler had only two or three days before said that there was only one opinion in Germany—his, and that the whole of the German people were solidly with him, and when not a word of con-

demnation had been heard from any of the rulers of Germany! None but Mr. Chamberlain, who has publicly professed his trust in Hitler's honesty and truthfulness, can even pretend to swallow that lie.

Even this is not the end. Since it has been officially decreed that hereafter no Jew is to be permitted to engage in trade or commerce in Germany, and, moreover, if any agitation for the better treatment of the Jews in Germany is carried on in other countries, the whole 600,000 of German Jews will suffer for it. That is strictly acting up to the Fascist rule in both Italy and Germany, where parents are imprisoned and ill-treated because their children have escaped the terror, and children because their parents have escaped. We sincerely hope that this advice will be ignored. The Jews in Germany cannot be treated worse than is at present the case, and if the Jews are massacred wholesale that would be an act of kindness compared with their continuing to live under such a rule. A general massacre would be an act of humanity compared with living the life of degradation and slow torture to which the brutes who rule Germany have condemned all the German Jews. There is neither profit nor dignity in living under certain conditions.

Russia, in the bad old days, had its occasional pogroms. But these were occasional, and when over there were periods of rest. But for cold-blooded, calculated brutality, the world has seen nothing to compare with the conduct of these semi-insane criminals who rule the German people. It is useless saying that it is not our business how Germany treats its people. It is everybody's business when such an outrage on human decency is committed.

But after all why should anyone be surprised at these murderous outrages in Germany? No one, but Mr. Chamberlain ought to be surprised, and his childlike confidence in Hitler and his gang is one of the bright spots on a dark outlook. But what this gang is doing is Germany now is only in line with what it has done ever since it achieved power. It began its career by setting fire to its own House of Parliament, in order to find an excuse for killing and torturing Socialists, Freethinkers and Communists. Thalemann, the leader of the Communists, has been in prison for over five years without being brought to trial. Over five years of slow torture. The Chancellor of an independent nation, Austria, is lying in prison, without trial, charged with not obeying orders issued by Hitler, head of another State. The assassins of Dolfuss are canonized as martyrs. Horst Weisel, plainly a sexual degenerate of a marked criminal type, has also been canonized and made the theme of a nation's hymn. Since the establishment of Hitler its history has been one long record of murder, assassination, arson, lying, robbery and out-

rage, such as no other country the world has known can produce. Why then be surprised at this wholesale robbery and torture of the Jews? It is in line with the Nazi record. And only our innocent Mr. Chamberlain still insists that Hitler is a gentleman whose word may be taken, and who has no ill-will towards England—so long as we do not elect a Government of which he disapproves, and so long as he is so busily engaged in gobbling up other small nations, that it would be dangerous for him openly to attack this country.

Reproduced from the "Freethinker"
of November 20, 1938.

REVIEWS.

1. **The Bible Examined**, by a Hindu. (The Book Company Ltd., Calcutta). Price As. 8.

In explaining how he came to write this book, the author says "that he was brought up as a boy in a Christian boarding school where he was the sole non-Christian, barring one or two Burmese and three Siamese students, and he came to imbibe a militant spirit while he became a believer in Christianity, which he discarded in later life, in favour of Vedantism." The book examines all the incongruities and immoralities of the Bible which claims to be the only true religion and true source of morality. It provides excellent material for anybody who wants to argue with missionaries. The ordinary reader will perhaps be surprised to learn that Catholics are discouraged from reading the Bible by the Pope, who is supposed to interpret it for them. He knows full well that an honest attempt to read and understand the Bible for oneself will be very dangerous for Christianity. The Bible inculcates the use of force and cruelty, which is encouraged by English public schools, and which goes a long way to explain the conduct of the British in India. British rulers have time and again expressed themselves in favour of force as the only proper way to govern the East. Christians very often refuse to consider the black man as a human being at all, though missionaries have to pretend that they do.

R. D. K.

2. **The Churches & Their Politics**, by Allan Flanders. International Publishing Company, London W 1. pp.23. Price three pence.

This little pamphlet proves to the hilt that as money and influence are the principal objectives of the Christian Churches and as these are necessarily linked with Capitalism, the Churches are obliged to be on good terms with the authorities in any capitalist state and to oppose the advent of Socialism with all their might and by any means, fair or foul. In spite of their adaptability to circumstances, their aim remains the same, viz. "that of weakening the will of the subject class to fight for their emancipation." This is why Hitler, Franco and Mussolini have all found support from the

Catholic Church. The writer warns Socialists to realise this clearly and to try to counteract their activities in time. R. D. K.

ALSO RECEIVED

Freedom in Twilight by M.V.V.K. Rangachari. Being the Symposium-paper on "Freedom and Authority in the Modern State" the dialectical synthesis in the history of scientific civilisation. Submitted to the Indian Philosophical Congress (Allahabad) 14th Session 1938. 25pp.

(Continued from page 14)

considered gods and show that they are just as human as any one of us, that their bodies follow the same laws as ours do. We are not worried what people think about the god in another world. That is a person whom nobody can get into touch with, he is not on the phone, nor has he left his address behind. But those that claim to be his agents, they are the people who control the masses because they thrust down the throats of these ignorant people their special claims. "Reason" should occupy itself in explaining the origins of religion and the various religious customs. This will help people to overcome their fear of the unknown which puts them under the sway of these religious leaders.

This should be the object of "Reason." Since the public platform does not seem to be a productive idea, we, the sympathisers with this movement, must support "Reason". There are many ways of doing this. One is to advertise in the journal, if you are businessmen and this will be a good source of income to run the journal. A second one which is within the means of everyone is to buy extra copies of the journal and distribute it amongst those whose leanings are towards rationalism and also amongst those who are bigots. I would suggest we should worry the latter more. Were we not all orthodox once? By sending them "Reason," which they will indignantly throw into the waste paper basket at the start but later on read surreptitiously, we will carry a glimmer of light into the darkness in which they live. Though "Reason" is but a feeble light, it is bound to react because their darkness is so thick.